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THE TITLE-MART

A COMEDY

IN THREE ACTS

BY

WINSTON CHURCHILL

New York
THE MACMILLAN COMPANY
LONDON: MACMILLAN & CO., LTD.
1905

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Set up and electrotyped. Published October, 1905.

Norwood Press
J. S. Cushing & Co. — Berwick & Smith Co.
Norwood, Mass., U.S.A.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

THE MARQUIS OF TREDBURY.	A young nobleman in financial straits.
REGINALD BARKING, M.P. . .	Son of "Barking's china."
MR. JOHN BLACKWELL . . .	Railroad President and Captain of Industry.
MR. LAWRENCE PEPYS . . .	Lawyer, man of the world.
ROY CLARKSON	Reporter on the *New York Morning Republic.*
HIRAM PETERS	Store-keeper and sheriff of Carroll County.
EZRA SWAZEY	His clerk.
TILDEN	Valet to Lord Tredbury.
Butler, footmen, etc.	
EDITH BLACKWELL	A modern, strenuous, American girl. Incidentally an heiress.
MRS. BLACKWELL	Second wife to Mr. Blackwell, stepmother of Edith.
LADY MARJORIE TICKNOR.	

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BALCHVILLE IN THE ADIRONDACKS

ACT I

SCENE. *The Post-office and little general store occupies half of the rear of the stage, the left side. It is a low, white building, with a porch and checker-paned windows on either side of the door, where goods are displayed, and signs,*

"MANNA BREAKFAST FOOD," etc.

There is a small sign,

"POST-OFFICE,"

and a larger sign over the porch,

"HIRAM PETERS, GENERAL STORE."

There is a sign against the wall of the Post-office, of more or less permanence and size:

"TIPTON'S HOTEL IN THE MOUNTAINS,
ON LAKE REGINA,
EIGHT MILES BY STAGE FROM BALCHVILLE.
LUXURIOUS SUITES.
GOLFING, FISHING, TENNIS, BOATING.
Z. TIPTON, PROPRIETOR."

There is also a large poster in a conspicuous place advertising,

"THE BALCHVILLE FAIR,"

with a list of prizes, trotting races, etc. During the act, the Fair is supposed to be in progress. At various

intervals, when the action is not interfered with, the boy, EZRA SWAZEY, *appears disconsolately in the doorway of the store.*

In front of the store, in the foreground, is a green, and around a great pine tree a seat, carved with various designs and initials. In the Right, rear, is seen the landing dock extending into the lake, beyond it the waters, and in the distance the hills on the farther side. There is a fringe of trees likewise on the extreme Right rear, and street is supposed to come in at Right front.

TIME: *About 4.30 on an August afternoon, the present day.*

AT RISE: *The boy,* EZRA SWAZEY, *is discovered standing dejectedly on the porch, one hand in his pocket, the other holding a scoop such as is used for coffee, sugar, etc. In front of him, on the green, stands* HIRAM PETERS *himself, sheriff of Carroll County, a tall, vigorous figure of a countryman, sunburned, with a shrewd but kindly face. He has a fringe of gray beard on his chin, but no mustache. He wears a blue flannel shirt, trousers tucked into his boots, a waistcoat, no coat, and a slouch hat. The waistcoat is unbuttoned, his suspenders in evidence. On the waistcoat is pinned a shield, the badge of his office.*

EZRA

(*Spitting dejectedly on the green.*)

Which hoss won the first heat, Hiram?

HIRAM

What's that feller's name that lives over to the Centre? Jimson. Don't be cast down, Ezry, we can't all git to the Fair.

(*Looking off, Left.*)

Here comes John Blackwell. When he was your age he didn't go to no fairs, and now he kin travel from here to Puget Sound on his own railroad. Ain't that any comfort?

(*Laughs.*)

(*Enter, Left,* MR. BLACKWELL. *He is a big man, with a kindly, rugged face, smooth-shaven, and is dressed in an expensive, loose-fitting, dark cutaway suit, such as rich men with no ostentation affect. He wears square-toed boots, a low, turn-down collar, and gray felt hat, and over his arm he carries a linen duster.*) How be ye, John?

MR. BLACKWELL

Why aren't you at the Fair, Hiram?

HIRAM

Ben thar all day. I jest come over to see ef Ezry had eloped with my stock of goods and Uncle Sam's mail. He's feelin' kinder bad, but I was tellin' him of your career. The way to get rich is to 'tend store on Fair days. Ain't that so, John?

(MR. BLACKWELL *laughs, a hearty, wholesome laugh, but says nothing.*)

My business ain't what it used to be — I ain't made an arrest for nigh on to two months, and that were only vagrancy.

(*Sadly.*)

There hain't even a confidence man at that Fair.

MR. BLACKWELL

(*Laughing.*)

Have you seen any lords around, Hiram?

HIRAM

(*With interest.*)

Lords! No, have you got a warrant?

MR. BLACKWELL

(*Laughing.*)

I wish you would arrest him, Hiram. My wife tells me he's come over here to marry Edith.

HIRAM

By jiminy, that feller! The Marquis of Tred somethin' —

MR. BLACKWELL

Tredbury.

HIRAM

(*With mock impressiveness.*)

The Marquis of Tredbury! He's got a whole soot of rooms at Tipton's. Guess Edith's got more sense than to invest in a shell game of that kind, hain't she, John?

MR. BLACKWELL

(*Dryly.*)

I hope so.

HIRAM

Say, when I heard he was at Tipton's Hotel, I says to Bill Morton, it seems kinder strange that Mrs. Blackwell hain't got hold of him and fetched him up to that palatial camp of yours.

MR. BLACKWELL

That's just what she's going to do. She's coming over after him in the launch, and he's coming down from Tipton's to meet her here.

HIRAM

I want to know!

(*A pause.*)

John, you and I used to run around these hills barefoot when we were boys, long afore you went to New York and got to be a millionnaire. I always knowed you was smart, but I never callated to see you a captain of industry. And I ain't never got above a country storekeeper and sheriff.

(*Patting the badge.*)

MR. BLACKWELL

(*Laughs deprecatingly, takes out two cigars, gives one to* HIRAM, *and they smoke. Sighs.*)

Hiram, do you remember my grandfather, the Reverend Cephas Blackwell?

HIRAM

(*Laughing.*)

Do I remember him? Say, John, I'll never forgit the day he caught you and me stealin' apples outen Deacon Saunders' orchard. Maybe he didn't tan us — I want to know!

MR. BLACKWELL

Those were happy days, Hiram.
(*Puts his hand on* HIRAM'S *shoulder.*)

HIRAM

I've often thought I could put my finger on one reason of your success, John. You never forgit old friends.

MR. BLACKWELL

(*Gruffly.*)

Tut, tut!

HIRAM

Wal, you never did. When you come back here fifteen years ago, with all that money, and bought your grandfather's farm I was kinder skeered. I own to it. I thought you'd forgit Hiram Peters. But, by godfrey, you most shook my hand off, when you seen me in front of this here store.

MR. BLACKWELL

(*Grunts disapprovingly.*)

HIRAM

John, them was days afore your first wife died, afore you built this grand camp, when you was livin' plain and comfortable in the Reverend Cephas's old house. I always had a fancy for that house. Now it hain't nothin' but a — what do you call it?

MR. BLACKWELL

(*Sighing.*)

A lodge.

HIRAM

(*With contempt.*)

Wal, you hain't changed, though you hev got all them powdered mummies in gold lace and stockin's to wait on you.

(MR. BLACKWELL *sighs.* HIRAM *places his hand on his shoulder, sympathetically.*)

Don't take it so hard, John, I didn't mean nothin'. One thing, you hain't lost your taste for fancy chickens, hev you? Thar's some of the finest I ever see over to the Fair, close to that place whar they hev the stun bolt contests. Say, John, thar's a little black and red cock thar that puts up as fine as any bird I ever clapped eyes on. He could lick any chicken in your coop.

MR. BLACKWELL

Hiram, I'm ashamed of you. You know I don't buy them to fight.

HIRAM

No, you don't buy 'em to fight, but when they do fight, you hain't averse to lookin' on. John, I wasn't brought up with you for nothin'. And that daughter of yours is jest like you, a nice, common lady, no airs, and my, hain't she pretty! (*Enter, Left,* LORD TREDBURY *and* MR. REGINALD BARKING, *followed by* TILDEN, *weighted down with hat boxes and other luggage, which he deposits on the grass.* TREDBURY *is a well-built, clean-cut, athletic-looking young man,*

soberly dressed in a blue serge suit and with a quiet manner. MR. REGINALD BARKING *is heavier built, red-faced, wears a somewhat loud gray checked morning suit, white spats, and a monocle.*)

Speakin' of the devil, thar's the lord now.

MR. BLACKWELL

(*Glances at* BARKING *with anything but approval.*)

(*To* HIRAM.)

Well, good-by, Hiram; I'll see you at the Fair. Did you say they were near the stone bolt place?

HIRAM

By godfrey, I thought ye couldn't keep away. Say, John, take a look at the black and red.

MR. BLACKWELL

(*Going.*)

Yes, yes.

HIRAM

And say, John, thar's a mottled one thar —

MR. BLACKWELL

Yes, yes.

(*Exit, Left.*)

TREDBURY

Tilden, you may inquire for the mail.

(*Exit* TILDEN *into the Post-office.* HIRAM PETERS *watches them with curiosity, not unmixed with contempt.*)

(*To* BARKING.)

No one here yet, Reggie.

(TILDEN *emerges from the Post-office with letters. He gives quite a number to* LORD TREDBURY, *and one or two to* BARKING.)

BARKING

(*Puts in his glass, looks at his letters, and thrusts them into his pocket. To* HIRAM.)

I say, my good fellow, is there a chemist in this place?

HIRAM

Guess you've made a mistake, Mister, I'm a damned bad feller. See that badge?

(*Pointing to the badge on his waistcoat.*)

BARKING

(*Adjusting his glass, and examining badge.*)

Very interesting, I'm sure. But, where is the chemist?

HIRAM

The what?

TREDBURY

They call 'em drug stores in America, Barking.

HIRAM

(*To* TREDBURY.)

Wal, you seem to hev some sense. Thar's a kind of a drug store about a block up the road.

(*Points off Right.*)

BARKING

(*To* TREDBURY.)

What an interesting native! I say, if you don't mind, I think I'll be strolling up there.

(*Exit, Right.*)

HIRAM

(*To* TREDBURY.)

Hain't you going to exhibit him at the fair?

(TILDEN *claps his hand over his mouth.*)

TREDBURY

Oh, he's a pretty good sort when you get to know him.

HIRAM

Guess I don't want to know him. If he's a lord, then I don't stand for him.

(*Exit, Left, in deep disgust.*)

TREDBURY

(*Laughing quietly: to* TILDEN.)

Just run away and pay that chap who drove us down here.

TILDEN

Very good, your lordship.

TREDBURY

(*Taking out his letters, and going over and sitting down on the seat under the tree.*)

Well, here I am in America, with fifteen thousand pounds' worth of debts, two country places mortgaged up to the leads, — assets, a letter of introduction to Mrs. Blackwell, stepmother to an heiress worth twenty millions.

(*Lights a cigarette.*)

Let's see what we have here.

(*Opens bills: reads languidly.*)

"Will your lordship please remit —"

(*Tears it up into pieces and throws it on the grass. Opens another.*)

"Will your lordship please see that a small check —"

(*Tears it up, throws pieces on the grass, and opens another.*)

"We shall not press your lordship at this time, as we understand that your lordship is in America —" Ah!

(*Tears it up and throws pieces on the grass.*)

Hello, here's a letter from Marjorie.

(*Looks at the outside.*)

Postmarked Newport, R.I., sent to the steamer and forwarded here.

(*Opens it, reads a little way.*)

I say, here's a rum go.

(*Then reads:*)

"Newport.

"Dear Treddy: —

"I am staying here in Newport with the Windhams. I have just had a note from Lady Allerdyce saying you were coming to this country on the *Campagna*, and it is *entendu* that you are going to the Adirondacks to visit the Blackwells. You and I have always been friends, and I don't mind being frank with you. I have been in America three weeks, and there are many more desirable *partis* in the country than Edith

Blackwell. Heiresses, really attractive ones, are very easy to get. This Blackwell girl is unattractive, hoidenish, impossible.

(TREDBURY *repeats:* "*Unattractive, hoidenish, impossible!*")

Entre nous, she would never do for the Marquess of Tredbury. I knew the Blackwells in London, where I assisted in getting a few invitations for Mrs. Blackwell, — for a consideration. It was a case of *noblesse oblige*. Mrs. Blackwell is one of those horrid American women who know all about titles. If you get this before you start for the Adirondacks, don't start. Come to Newport.

"Lady Allerdyce writes me that you are crossing with your friend of Oxford days, Reggie Barking, of Barking's china. Treddy, why wouldn't he do for me? I shall have to marry some one like that soon, so bring him here. And surely *he* can't be after a rich American. He will have to marry into the Aristocracy. I saw him once from the Ladies' Gallery in the House of Commons, when everybody was leaving because he was going to speak. But if I married him, I shouldn't have to listen to his speeches, and it would be better than doing secretary's work at house parties. I think I might persuade the Duke to get him a title.

"Whatever you do, don't go to the Blackwells',

or that designing woman will marry you to her stepdaughter before you can turn around. I suppose I shall have to go there before I leave America. *Mais, que voulez vous?* Beggars are not choosers.

"Yours in haste,
"Marjorie Ticknor."

(*Looking up.*)

By jove, I wish I'd got that note earlier.

(*Looking around.*)

I suppose there's no getting out of it now.

(*Enter* BARKING, *Right.*)

BARKING

I say, Treddy, Mrs. Blackwell isn't expecting me, you know. It would be devilish awkward if she didn't want me — she only invited you.

TREDBURY

Never mind that, old chap, Americans have the reputation of being very hospitable.

(*Aside.*)

Unattractive, hoidenish, impossible!

BARKING

What did you say?

TREDBURY

Reggie, I've had a letter from Lady Marjorie Ticknor. She's in Newport.

BARKING

What, the Duke of Kay's granddaughter?

TREDBURY

(*Absently.*)

By the way, she had heard I was travelling with you, and wanted me to bring you to Newport.

BARKING

(*Putting up his glass.*)

Did she say anything about me?

TREDBURY

Ahem — yes — said she'd seen you in the House — or something of that sort.

BARKING

You don't mind reading it, do you, Treddy?

TREDBURY

It wouldn't be at all good for you, Reggie. She gives you rather a puff, you know.

BARKING

Does she, now! This is a red-letter day for me.
(*Drawing a letter from his pocket. Impressively.*)
The governor has made a few — er — contributions to the party, you know — and he expects to be made a lord any day.

TREDBURY

I congratulate you, old chap. Why, that means you will have a title.

BARKING

Er — yes.

TREDBURY

You look more — like a person with a title than I do. Every one's picked you out for the lord, at first.
(*Sighs.*)
I wish to the devil you would take my title and use it until you get your own.

BARKING

What do you mean?

TREDBURY

Just that. Take the title and use it as long as you want. I should be infinitely obliged to be

relieved of it for a while, — and it can't make a great deal of difference here in America.

(*With inspiration.*)

By jove, why not begin on Mrs. Blackwell to-day? She's sure to take you for me when she comes down here. Let her think so.

BARKING

By jove, it would be a rum joke. And you?

TREDBURY

I will go as plain Mr. Barking, of Barking's china. I beg pardon — as Reginald Barking, M.P.

BARKING

(*Admiringly: slapping his shoulder.*)

I say, Tredbury, that *would* be like you. You haven't changed a bit since Oxford. I believe you're the wildest devil in England.

TREDBURY

If you're going to have the title, you'll have to get over that beastly habit of thumping people, Barking. I suppose you inherit it.

BARKING

I suppose I do. My old governor used to say that it was worth more to him to be seen slapping

a lord on the back than to have his charity subscriptions published.

TREDBURY

(*Glancing around.*)

And this is wasted!

(*He sits down on the bench, and lights a cigarette.*)

Reggie, I'm really serious. Take my title when we go up to the Blackwells', there's a good-hearted chap.

BARKING

But there's the heiress. She might fall in love with me, you know.

TREDBURY

Oh, no, she wouldn't.

BARKING

I don't think it's quite decent to say that. She *might* fall in love with me.

TREDBURY

(*Looking him over critically.*)

I find it very difficult to lie to you, Reggie. She might take a fancy to you, of course — there's the off chance. I should be willing to make the odds twenty to one.

BARKING

(*Indignantly.*)
Pounds?

TREDBURY

Guineas, if you like.

BARKING

Of course, you're in a bad humor. That may account for it. But upon my word, I don't see why you should go out of your way to insult me. I've always thought — er — I wasn't bad looking, you know.

TREDBURY

Who said you were bad looking?

BARKING

(*Offended.*)
You inferred it.

TREDBURY

Nothing of the kind. I said it wasn't probable that Miss Blackwell would fall in love with you. No more it is.

(*Examining* BARKING *critically.*)
You're a very imposing, distinguished-looking person, Reggie, but — er — you're not precisely the kind women leave their husbands for.

BARKING

(*Starting.*)

I say!

TREDBURY

(*Continuing contemplatively.*)

Now, if you were to go up there to the Blackwells', this little affair of Miss Blackwell's getting married to a title would languish of itself. You wouldn't want an ugly girl, and she wouldn't want you.

BARKING

You didn't say she was ugly.

TREDBURY

Didn't I? Well, she is. I've been told so, — on the best authority. She's unattractive, hoidenish, impossible, — and you won't fancy her. It will only be for a day, and we'll go on to Newport to-morrow.

(*Rises, and crosses over Right.*)

I think I'll go and see what became of Tilden.

(*Exit, lower Right.*)

BARKING

(*Calling after him.*)

I say, you've quite offended me, you know.

(*To himself.*)

Confound 'em, they're so dashed sure of themselves!

(*Enter, Left,* EDITH BLACKWELL. *She is a very handsome girl, dressed in a linen riding habit, such as is worn in the country, and she swings a hunting whip. She barely glances at* BARKING, *and goes into the Post-office.* BARKING *takes out his glass, fixes it in his eye, and looks after her.*)

By jove, what a ripping girl!

(EDITH *comes out of the Post-office with two letters in her hand. She flashes an amused look at him, goes slowly down Left, sits down on the seat under the tree, and begins to read her letters, glancing at him from time to time with the same amused look. When she looks at him,* BARKING *looks away, but keeps his glass in, and when she drops her eyes, he looks at her again. He coughs from time to time.*)

Devilish fetching, by jove!

(*Coughs.*)

Devilish fetching!

(*Coughs again.*)

EDITH

(*Looking up at him again.*)

You really ought to take something.

BARKING

(*Overcome.*)

Er — I beg pardon. Take something, did you say?

EDITH

For the cough. I am afraid you will go into a decline.

BARKING

(*Trying to be coquettish. Completely misunderstanding her.*)

Oh, I say, how jolly of you!

EDITH

(*Coolly.*)

How jolly of me?

BARKING

Er — to speak to me.

EDITH

It was merely charity, because you don't appear to be able to take care of yourself.

BARKING

It's awfully jolly to have some one to look after one, you know.

EDITH

Is it?

(*Glances at the luggage on the grass.*)

What's become of your guardian?

BARKING

Er — I'm alone.

EDITH

That isn't very complimentary to me.

(BARKING *starts to explain.*)

Alone in America, I suppose you mean. How appalling!

BARKING

Er — that is —

(*Hesitates, and continues to look at her through the monocle.*)

EDITH

You have come over here to learn to speak English fluently, I gather. I'm afraid it will take a long time.

BARKING

Oh, I say!

EDITH

(*Rising, and apparently becoming fascinated by the monocle.*)

I wish I could do that. Do you suppose it would fit my eye?

BARKING

(*Overwhelmed.*)
I'm sure I don't know.

EDITH

Does it come off?

BARKING

(*Solemnly dropping it out of his eye.*)
See! Like that.

EDITH

I wonder if I could do it.
(BARKING *unfastens it from his coat and hands it to her. She puts it in her eye, and glances coldly at* BARKING.)
Er — Lord Tredbury, I believe.

BARKING

By jove!
(*Aside.*)
She's taken me for Treddy.

EDITH

(*Mimicking* BARKING, *drops the glass out of her eye. She hands it to him.*)
I say, my stepmother's coming for you.

BARKING

Er — I beg pardon — your stepmother?

EDITH

Yes, my stepmother. Do you imagine for a moment that a young man with a title could be in the surrounding country without her coming for him?

BARKING

(*Agitated, astonished.*)

Er — might I ask to whom I am speaking?

EDITH

Certainly. I'm Miss Blackwell.

BARKING

You're — you're Miss Blackwell!

(*Backs away from her, and suddenly begins to laugh at the joke on* TREDBURY.)

EDITH

What's so funny about that?

BARKING

(*Embarrassed.*)

Nothing. I beg pardon, I'm sure. I was — er

— er — surprised — that's all — surprised. Do you know who I thought you were?

EDITH

I haven't the faintest idea.

BARKING

(*Blurting.*)
Dotty Davenport.

EDITH

Dotty Davenport!
(*Laughs.*)
Oh, the actress.

BARKING

Er — there is a remarkable resemblance, you know — only you are better looking.

EDITH

Thanks.

BARKING

(*After an awkward pause.*)
Do you know, I expected to find you quite ugly and unattractive.

EDITH

You must have been reading Henry James.

BARKING

I have been thinking, instead, of Guinevere.

EDITH

Never heard of her. Was she fast?

BARKING

(*Overcome.*)

Er — fast! By jove, that's awfully good, you know.

EDITH

Did she have a record?

BARKING

(*Bursting into laughter.*)

How awfully jolly you are! I say, she did have rather a record.

EDITH

She was a thoroughbred, of course?

BARKING

(*Laughing loudly.*)

Oh — er — yes, a thoroughbred. How humorous you Americans are.

EDITH

I shall look her up. Did you say her name was Guinevere?

BARKING

(*Screws in his monocle.*)
She wasn't a horse, you know; she was a queen.

EDITH

Is that all?

BARKING

You've never read Tennyson?

EDITH

Let me see. He wrote one of the Badminton series, didn't he?

BARKING

Oh, by jove! He was a poet.

EDITH

(*Appearing to lose interest.*)
Oh! I should hardly have thought you poetical, Lord Tredbury.

BARKING

I say, do you think I look like a lord?

EDITH

Certainly.

BARKING

Do I — er — act like a lord?

EDITH

If one may call it acting.

BARKING

(*Laughing.*)
Oh, I say, dashed clever!

EDITH

I can't stay here talking to you all day. I promised my father to meet him at the Fair.

BARKING

Oh, I say, mayn't I go along?

EDITH

I am afraid you'll have to wait for my stepmother. I suppose the motor boat has broken down again, but don't be discouraged. My stepmother will get you.

(*Edith picks up the riding whip, smiles at him, and exit, Left.*)

BARKING

(*Sticking in his glass, and looking after her.*)

Phew! Ugly, unattractive, hoidenish! By jove, I believe I'll go! What a joke on Treddy!

(*Enter, Right,* LORD TREDBURY.)

TREDBURY

Who was the lady, Reggie?

BARKING

Er — what lady?

TREDBURY

Oh, come now, what lady!

BARKING

Er — you mean that was just here? Er — by the way, Treddy, did you ever see Dotty Davenport?

TREDBURY

I've seen her photograph. She's one of the few I haven't known, and I've always wanted to. Do you mean to say that was Dotty Davenport?

(*Steps over Left, apparently gazing after her.*)

By jove, she can ride! What's she doing here?

BARKING

Er — staying at the Blackwells' camp.

TREDBURY

That's rather fortunate.

BARKING

And — er — I say, deuced odd, you know, but she took me for you. She called me Lord Tredbury.

TREDBURY

I'm almost reconciled to going up to the Blackwells'. Where's she gone now?

BARKING

To the Fair, she said.

TREDBURY

To the Fair, eh?

BARKING

You think Miss Davenport attractive?

TREDBURY

Don't you?

BARKING

Er — not very. You know I never had your passion for actresses.

TREDBURY

Reggie, I'm afraid you'll have to assume the title for this visit. It's thrust upon you.

BARKING

(*With pretended reluctance.*)

Couldn't think of it.

(*The sound of a motor boat is heard.*)

TREDBURY

(*Stepping behind the Post-office and looking off into the lake.*)

There comes Mrs. Blackwell now. Do be decent, Reggie, it can't do any harm. Er — I imagine Mrs. Blackwell, from what I hear of her, will enjoy the joke. And just say that you have a friend you would like to bring along — a Mr. Barking.

(*Goes over Left.*)

BARKING

A Mr. Barking. Where are you going?

(*The sound of a band is heard in the distance.*)

TREDBURY

I think I'll step over to the Fair. It can't be far away. I hear it. I've always been interested in Fairs. You might stop there for me — if Mrs. Blackwell is willing to put me up.

(*Exit Left, swinging his stick.*)

BARKING

(*Calling after him, in a panic.*)

I say, Tredbury, don't be an ass. It's impossible. The man's mad — mad!

(*Calling.*)

I say — come back!

(*Glances fearfully behind him, and goes over extreme lower Left and stands with every appearance of being about to run after him.* EZRA SWAZEY *comes out of the Post-office, his pencil behind his ear, a scoop in his hand, and spits. Enter from Right, rear of Post-office,* MRS. BLACKWELL *and* LAWRENCE PEPYS. MRS. BLACKWELL *is a pretty woman of about thirty-five, very elaborately dressed, has many social airs, and talks too rapidly for interruption.* PEPYS *is a comfortable, healthy-looking gentleman of about forty years, in gray flannels and a straw hat. When he takes off the hat it is seen that he is a little inclined to baldness.*)

MRS. BLACKWELL

Thank heaven, there's the luggage! I was afraid we'd missed him.

(*Nudging* PEPYS, *and going forward.*)

There he is! I should have known him anywhere, Larry. They are so unmistakable! Ahem!

(BARKING *turns.*)

I believe I have the pleasure of addressing Lord Tredbury. Dear Lord Tredbury, I'm so sorry to keep you waiting, really. I scarcely know how to apologize. But motor boats are so uncertain, and there was something the matter with the cylinder — wasn't it the cylinder, Larry? — Yes. Once we were on the lake nearly half the night.

(*She has approached him effusively and taken his hand.* BARKING *overwhelmed with embarrassment, and trying to get a word in.*)

Why didn't you come up to the camp at once, instead of going to Tipton's Hotel and sending me Lady Deering's letter? You would have been so welcome. I love English people, and they have been so kind to me. How did you leave dear Lady Deering?

BARKING

But, I say, Mrs. Blackwell, I'm not —

(*Enter* EDITH, *Right.*)

MRS. BLACKWELL

Here's Edith!

EDITH

Isn't Papa here? They told me at the Fair he was coming over here with Hiram to get a crate for some chickens he'd bought.

MRS. BLACKWELL

(*Going to her: impressively.*)

My dear, here's Lord Tredbury!

EDITH

(*Nodding to* BARKING, *carelessly.*)

Yes, I've been talking to him. I wonder where Papa can be?

MRS. BLACKWELL

You've — you've been talking to him!

(*Aside, to* EDITH.)

Oh, Edith, how could you have left him! My dear, I may not have told you. One of the oldest titles in England!

EDITH

Yes, yes, you told me, — quite threadbare, I should say.

MRS. BLACKWELL

Oh, Edith, you must try not to shock him — you shock everybody.

(*Enter man in livery, from motor boat.*)
Gustave, put Lord Tredbury's luggage on the boat.

(*Man takes luggage.*)

BARKING

Oh, please, Mrs. Blackwell, I must explain — !

MRS. BLACKWELL

I am the one to explain. But first let me introduce you formally to Miss Blackwell —

(BARKING *bows.*)

and allow me to present Mr. Pepys.

(*The men bow.*)

And now we really must be going if we are to have any tea.

BARKING

(*Aside.*)

My God! what shall I do? I'll let Tredbury explain.

(*Aloud.*)

I say, Mrs. Blackwell, would you mind going to the Fair for a few moments?

MRS. BLACKWELL

To the Fair! Dear Lord Tredbury, you couldn't possibly take any interest in an ordinary

American Fair — such a hodge-podge — and such smells! And they are not even opened.

BARKING

The fact is — I should like awfully to see it. I have a friend —

MRS. BLACKWELL

Why, of course, it might be amusing — it's so barbaric — if you can stand the smells. Come, Edith, we'll all go.

EDITH

I have to stay here. I promised Papa I'd meet him.

(*To* PEPYS.)

Larry, I'll bet you ten dollars my mare beats your old motor boat home.

PEPYS

(*Laughing.*)

You ought to give odds.

EDITH

(*To* EZRA, *who is on the porch.*)

Ezra, I want to telephone to the Centre.

(*With a little coquetry, to* BARKING.)

I'll see you at tea, Lord Tredbury. Your English seems to be improving.

(*Exit into store.*)

BARKING

(*Looking after her, through his glass.*)

By jove!

MRS. BLACKWELL

(*Smiling with appreciation at his obvious admiration.*)

Edith is quite a personage; I'm sure you'll like her. Come, Lord Tredbury, we'll go by the launch. It's shorter.

(MRS. BLACKWELL, BARKING, *and* PEPYS *going around the Post-office.*)

But mind, I don't hold out any hopes of the Fair.

(*Exit* MRS. BLACKWELL, BARKING, *and* PEPYS.)

EZRA

(*Spitting vindictively.*)

Everybody gits thar but me.

(*Enter* LORD TREDBURY, *followed by* TILDEN.)

TREDBURY

I wonder how the deuce I missed her!

(*To* TILDEN.)

What's become of the luggage?

TILDEN

I 'int touched it, me lord.

TREDBURY

Where have you been all this time?

TILDEN

I 'ad to find the man with the 'osses, me lord. I come across 'im at last in a public 'ouse.

EZRA

Say, Mister, Mrs. Blackwell took your things, along with that other lord, and went off to the Fair in the la'nch.

TREDBURY

Oh, thanks. Tilden!

TILDEN

Yessir.

TREDBURY

Go to the Fair, find Mr. Barking, and be careful to address him as Lord Tredbury —

TILDEN

'Im a lord, your lordship!

TREDBURY

Call him Lord Tredbury, and speak of me

as Mr. Barking. And tell him Mr. Barking is here waiting for him. Do you understand?

TILDEN

Perfectly, me lord. I've done strange things for your lordship before.

TREDBURY

And then you are to go to Tipton's Hotel, and stay there until I send for you.

(TILDEN *tips, and exit, Left.* TREDBURY *lights a cigarette, crosses over and sits down on the seat with the tree between him and the Post-office.* EDITH *comes out of Post-office.*)

EZRA

(*To* EDITH.)
Say, which is the lord, anyway?

EDITH

What do you mean, Ezra? I've only seen one.

EZRA

Well, thar's been two stoppin' at Tipton's. And while you were in telephonin' the other one come here with his hired man — he's thar now,

whar the smoke is behind the tree — he come here with his hired man and told him to go to the Fair and call the other lord something or other. Say, I guess I ought to tell Hiram. This is a con game. These Fairs always bring crooks.

EDITH

(*Looks at him, then puts her hand to her mouth to suppress laughter. Goes forward, peeks around the tree at the unconscious* TREDBURY, *then returns. Takes a dollar from her purse and hands it to* EZRA.)

I'll give you that if you say nothing about it to any one. And don't tell him who I am even if he asks you.

EZRA

Gee Whiz, I promise. Cross myself. Say, this is better than goin' to the Fair.

(EDITH *approaches* TREDBURY *from behind, and swinging her whip from the lash, purposely comes very near* TREDBURY'S *head with it.*)

TREDBURY

(*Starting to his feet.*)

Easy there!

EDITH

Pardon me.

TREDBURY

I've been looking everywhere for you.

EDITH

For me?

TREDBURY

Yes. I heard you'd gone to the Fair, and missed you there. You see, I've always wanted to meet you, Miss Davenport. I — er — admire the profession.

(EDITH *stifles a desire to laugh, and continues to look at him, which he finds disconcerting.*)

I've — I've always wanted to see you, but by bad luck I was in Switzerland when you played "Banbury Cross" in London. If I may be allowed to say so, you're one of the very few actresses who doesn't disappoint off the stage. And when I heard that Dotty Davenport was staying at the Blackwells' —

EDITH

Is it indiscreet to ask to whom I'm speaking?

TREDBURY

I'm not sure that I quite know.

(*Hastily.*)

You see, I'm quite overcome at this unexpected meeting.

EDITH

This not knowing who one is seems to be a British characteristic. Perhaps I can help you. Have you a card case in your pocket, or an accident insurance policy?

(TREDBURY *continues to gaze at her with quiet admiration.*)

If I had happened to hit you with the head of this riding whip, you might never have been identified. In addition to recalling me, have you any previous recollections?

TREDBURY

(*Enraptured.*)

I'm rather glad you didn't hit me on the head, you know.

EDITH

It might have jogged your memory.

TREDBURY

I got a nasty lick with a polo mallet once.

EDITH

Perhaps that's what's the matter with you.

TREDBURY

(*Straightening up.*)
Oh, come now, you don't think there's anything the matter with me.

EDITH

It does strike me as a little strange that you can't remember your name. I met another Englishman who looked as if he didn't know his name not twenty minutes ago, — Lord Tredbury. Do you know him?

TREDBURY

I — er — yes.

EDITH

You seem a little ashamed of it. Is he disreputable?

TREDBURY

Oh, quite the contrary. A sober, reliable, steady-going sort of chap. Would you mind telling me what you are laughing at?

EDITH

I'm relieved to hear it. I heard he'd gamed away his castle, and drunk up the family library. It's made him awfully dry. And — well, I can't tell you everything. He's supposed to be the worst case in England.

TREDBURY

(*Sadly.*)

I'm sure you do him an injustice. He doesn't look like a rake, does he?

EDITH

No. If I had seen you two together, I should have picked you for the part.

TREDBURY

(*Bowing.*)

I feel flattered.

EDITH

He seems much too stupid.

TREDBURY

Thanks very much. Then you were disappointed in Tredbury?

EDITH

Oh, no, not disappointed. He was quite what I expected — an uninteresting titled person without any brains.

(TREDBURY *laughs.*)

I don't care at all for titles — that's one of my failings. I hope you haven't one, too.

TREDBURY

Have you ever heard the name of Barking?

EDITH

I once existed off it — in the nursery.

TREDBURY

(*Solemnly.*)

Er — my name's Barking — Reginald Barking.

EDITH

Are you quite sure? But you look too clever to make a mistake of that kind. As for Lord Tredbury, of course it is too much to expect that he should always remember his name.

(TREDBURY *laughs.*)

What are these things?

(*She stoops and picks up some of the remnants of* TREDBURY'S *letters, which are strewn on the grass; reads:*)

"To H. I. and A. M. the Emperor of Austria. Will Lord Tredbury kindly oblige us with a cheque?" Is that the way Lord Tredbury treats his bills?

TREDBURY

Well — er — in England, the fact is that tradesmen haven't much respect for people who pay them promptly. Of course they're paid sooner or later —

EDITH

But who's going to pay Lord Tredbury's?

TREDBURY

(*Greatly embarrassed.*)
I don't quite know. Why do you ask?

EDITH

Oh, for no reason. I heard he was considering Miss Blackwell.

TREDBURY

(*Begins to laugh.*)
That's off.

EDITH

Off? What do you mean? I never heard it was on.

TREDBURY

You're staying at the Blackwells', aren't you?
(*Craftily.*)
Awfully nice girl, — Miss Blackwell!

EDITH

She's nothing of the sort.

TREDBURY

That's what — er — Tredbury heard. And you see, he's an odd chap. He hasn't at all got the modern idea of marriage, and he feels that, as long as he has to sell his beastly title, he might as well try for a chance of getting some one he could — er — love, and all that sort of thing.

EDITH

This Lord Tredbury doesn't seem very grasping in his ideas. But who was kind enough to give him this very accurate notion of Miss Blackwell?

TREDBURY

Well, I'll tell you, Miss Davenport. We're chummy, and all that.
(*Produces* LADY MARJORIE'S *letter.*)
See that letter!

EDITH

Why, it's addressed to Lord Tredbury!

TREDBURY

(*Confused.*)

Yes — er — he showed it to me. He didn't get it till just now — too late to turn back, you know. Rather a joke on Tredbury. It's from Lady Marjorie Ticknor — you wouldn't know her — she's travelled with the Blackwells.

(*Opens the letter.*)

She's staying in Newport, and advises — Tredbury — to come there. Listen: —

(*Reads:*)

"This Blackwell girl is hoidenish, unattractive, impossible. *Entre nous*, she would never do for the Marquess of Tredbury."

EDITH

How kind of Lady Marjorie! So disinterested!

TREDBURY

Oh, Marjorie could hardly be called disinterested, you know. She had special reasons for asking — Tredbury to Newport. She has an eye on Barking.

EDITH

On you?

TREDBURY

(*Floundering.*)

Oh, yes, of course, on me. A jolly grind on me.

(*Reads, from sheer embarrassment:*)

"Lady Allerdyce writes me that you are crossing with your friend of Oxford days, Reggie Barking, of Barking's china. Treddy, why wouldn't he do for me? I shall have to marry some one like that soon, so bring him here. And surely *he* can't be after a rich American. He will have to marry into the Aristocracy. I saw him once from the Ladies' Gallery in the House of Commons, when everybody was leaving because he was going to speak. But if I married him, I shouldn't have to listen to his speeches, and it would be better than doing secretary's work at house parties. I think I might persuade the Duke to get him a title."

EDITH

So *you* are destined for Lady Marjorie!

TREDBURY

(*Alarmed at the situation he has got into.*)

Not me! Oh, no — not me. I'd rather marry anybody — even —

EDITH

Even the unattractive Blackwell girl?

TREDBURY

I hope you're not a friend of hers.

EDITH

Quite the contrary. I've travelled with her too much.

TREDBURY

(*Jumping at the opening.*)

Travelled! Er — I suppose you travel in the summer, when you are not acting.

(EDITH *laughs.*)

Have you ever been in Norway?

EDITH

Bother Norway! Have you ever been in Japan?

TREDBURY

(*Laughing.*)

Yes.

EDITH

Perhaps you picked up something of the Jiu Jitsu Japanese wrestling. I'm rather interested in it, just now.

TREDBURY

I know one or two holds.

EDITH

Let's see if I know them. What are they?

TREDBURY

You mean to try them here?

EDITH

(*Coolly.*)

Yes, why not?

(*She lays down the riding whip.*)

Show me the first.

TREDBURY

(*Delightedly.*)

Well, I don't mind, Dotty. May I call you Dotty?

(*They face each other,* TREDBURY *hesitatingly,* EDITH *calmly. She takes hold of his arm, giving him a jerk that nearly carries him off his feet. He drops Marjorie's letter.*)

EDITH

That's the simplest one. I suppose you know that.

(EZRA SWAZEY *is enjoying this hugely from the porch.*)

TREDBURY

(*Recovering himself.*)

Ha, ha! Yes, I know that. But I'll show you one.

(*He lays down his hat, and manœuvres for a hold, she defending herself.*)

You're jolly good at it.

(*He catches her and she trips.*)

EDITH

That's not a bad one. But I believe I can stop you if you try it again.

TREDBURY

That wasn't at all bad. Try it again.

(*They try it again, when enter, around Right end of Post-office,* MRS. BLACKWELL, BARKING, *and* PEPYS, *who stand aghast watching the performance.* TREDBURY *catches sight of them and breaks loose with an exclamation.*)

EDITH

(*Looking around.*)

Hello, Grace!

(MRS. BLACKWELL *does not answer, but continues to stare through her lorgnette. With a glance at the petrified party,* EDITH *picks up her riding whip, and incidentally* MARJORIE'S *letter, which she pockets, unnoticed by* TREDBURY, *who is staring in a horrified way at* MRS. BLACKWELL. *His hat is off, and he is more or less dishevelled.*)

(*To* TREDBURY.)

Good-by, Mr. Barking.

(*Exit* EDITH, *Left.*)

MRS. BLACKWELL

(*In an icy voice, to* BARKING.)

I'm afraid we really ought to be going, dear Lord Tredbury. It's quite late, and none of us have had any tea. You must be famished.

BARKING

Tea! Er — the fact is, I never drink it. Mrs. Blackwell, allow me —

(*Is about to introduce* TREDBURY.)

MRS. BLACKWELL

(*Putting her hand on his arm: sweetly.*)

Then you shall have something stronger than tea, Lord Tredbury? We really must go.

(BARKING *gives a despairing glance at* TREDBURY, *who is standing mutely gazing at them. Exit,* MRS. BLACKWELL, *dragging* BARKING, *followed by* PEPYS. TREDBURY *gazes after them until the motor boat is heard going off. Then he picks up his hat.*)

EZRA

(*To* TREDBURY.)

Say, she kind of put it over you, didn't she? You're in the soup all around.

TREDBURY

Er — perhaps you can tell me how I can get a carriage to go to Tipton's Hotel.

EZRA

Back to Tipton's —

(*He is interrupted by the entrance, lower Right, of* MR. BLACKWELL *and* HIRAM, HIRAM *carrying a crate of game cocks.*)

HIRAM

(*Peering into the coop.*)

John, that black and red would put up a fight worth looking at.

MR. BLACKWELL

I won't hear of fighting, Hiram. You know my principles on that point.

HIRAM

Still, if they *was* to get mixed up accidentally, you wouldn't object, I'll bet a dollar.

EZRA

Here's a feller wants to know how to git back to Tipton's.

MR. BLACKWELL

(*To* HIRAM: *with a glance at* TREDBURY.)

Hello! Is it possible that my wife let an Englishman escape!

HIRAM

I guess she took the lord — I saw him prancin' 'round after her at the Fair.

MR. BLACKWELL

(*Slapping his leg.*)

That's just what she did.

(*Approaching* TREDBURY, *with a bluff heartiness.*)

Were you travelling with Lord Tredbury?

TREDBURY

Yes, yes I was.

MR. BLACKWELL

Have you lost him?

TREDBURY

I believe he's gone home with Mrs. Blackwell.

MR. BLACKWELL

(*Indignantly.*)
Didn't she invite you?

TREDBURY

Well — er — no, the fact is, she didn't.

MR. BLACKWELL

Guess your name's Barking, isn't it? They told me there was a Barking staying at Tipton's, son of the Barking that makes the china. Sir, I have a great respect for your father. I'd like to know him. I'm Mr. Blackwell. I'm glad to meet you.

(*Gives* TREDBURY *a hearty grip.*)

Just you come right along with me. I guess there's room for three of us in the buggy, and the

chickens, too — eh, Hiram? We're going right up to the camp now.

TREDBURY

But Mrs. Blackwell —

MR. BLACKWELL

She won't worry you. She has her guests, and I have mine. I've got my own wing, and we'll have a nice little dinner together — some special Havanas and '98 Krug, and a good time. Got any baggage?

TREDBURY

It seems to be gone.

EZRA

That feller in the boat took it.

MR. BLACKWELL

Well, it's lucky I found you. She can have her confounded titles — I haven't any use for 'em. Well, Hiram, we'd better be moving.

HIRAM

(*Picking up the crate: to* EZRA.)
If any one calls, just say I'm up to Blackwells'.

EZRA

Yep.

(*Exit, lower Right,* MR. BLACKWELL, TREDBURY, *and* HIRAM *carrying the crate,* EZRA *leaning against the post and looking after them.*)

CURTAIN

ACT II

SCENE. *Loggia of Mr. Blackwell's camp in the Adirondacks, spread with rugs and wicker furniture; a hammock. A table with a small telephone over Left. French novels scattered around. Entrance by French windows into house at Left and rear. At Right a lawn, with shrubbery and trees at extreme Right. At rear the lawn ends in a kind of rustic balustrade that overlooks the lake. The lake can be seen beyond the balustrade, and the mountains in the distance.*

TIME: *About 6.30 in the evening of the same day.*

(*Enter* MRS. BLACKWELL *and* PEPYS, *a footman with powdered hair and knee breeches following them. As* MRS. BLACKWELL *talks to* PEPYS, *she moves about the stage, and the footman keeps respectfully behind her, evidently awaiting a chance to speak to her.*)

MRS. BLACKWELL

Larry, I wonder why you are so satisfactory. You never say anything.

MR. PEPYS

Perhaps that is the reason.

MRS. BLACKWELL

What a dear Lord Tredbury is! How English to go to one's room at once, before one has seen the view!

(*Sighs.*)

There is something about the British aristocracy that is very difficult for us to achieve. And how marked the differences between their own classes! The idea of Edith actually wrestling with that vulgar Mr. Barking. I can't get over it.

MR. PEPYS

I thought he seemed rather a decent fellow. In fact, I fancy him on the whole more than this Lord Tredbury.

(MR. PEPYS *sits down in a chair and lights a cigarette.* MRS. BLACKWELL *walks up and down, the footman moving after her.*)

MRS. BLACKWELL

Larry! You know what trade is in England.

MR. PEPYS

Not as good as it was, I believe.

MRS. BLACKWELL

It would be just like Edith to fancy this Barking. I *had* to snub him.

(*Going close to him: with an air of confidence.*)

Larry, she *must* marry Tredbury. I've quite set my heart on it.

MR. PEPYS

Gracious! Already!

(*A pause.*)

Why are you so determined?

MRS. BLACKWELL

Don't be ridiculous, Larry. How can you ask — a man of the world? Can't you see the advantages? And then I should be quits with Adelaide Townsend. She's been simply unbearable since Nina became the Comtesse de Santerre-Benoît.

MR. PEPYS

Then you are only doing this to get even with Mrs. Townsend?

MRS. BLACKWELL

Don't be idiotic, Larry.
(*Walks off on the lawn.*)

FOOTMAN

(*Following her.*)
Madam!

MRS. BLACKWELL

(*Irritably: turning.*)
In heaven's name, what is it? Ever since I came in you've been shadowing me like — like an evil spirit.

FOOTMAN

If you please, Madam, Lady Marjorie Ticknor is here.

MRS. BLACKWELL

Lady Marjorie! Larry, Lady Marjorie Ticknor!

MR. PEPYS

What about her?

MRS. BLACKWELL

She's here — here.

MR. PEPYS

Lucky woman. How did she get here?

MRS. BLACKWELL

That's what I want to know.
(*To* FOOTMAN.)
How did she get here?

FOOTMAN

If you please, Madam, she came by way of Ead's Centre.

MRS. BLACKWELL

By way of Ead's Centre! Go on!

FOOTMAN

Yes, Madam. 'Er Ladyship telegraphed from Newport, but it seems the message went to Balchville.

MRS. BLACKWELL

How English, to telegraph to Balchville!
(*To* FOOTMAN.)
Where is her ladyship now?

FOOTMAN

In her room, Madam.

MRS. BLACKWELL

(*Starts away, Left.*)

FOOTMAN

If you please, Madam, her ladyship gave orders she was not to be disturbed under no conditions.

MRS. BLACKWELL

Dear Marjorie! How delightfully English! I wish we could learn the same sense of feeling at home in other people's houses.

(*To* FOOTMAN.)

That will do. You might tell her ladyship's maid that a new parcel of French novels came to-day.

FOOTMAN

'Er ladyship has already sent for them, Madam.

MRS. BLACKWELL

Did her ladyship get the kind of tea she likes?

FOOTMAN

Please, Madam, she 'ad the 'ousekeeper up, and told 'er to telegraph to New York for it.

MRS. BLACKWELL

Quite right. That will do.
(*To* PEPYS.)
Dear Marjorie!
(*Exit* FOOTMAN.)

MR. PEPYS

Dear Marjorie!

MRS. BLACKWELL

Marjorie did so much for us in London, Larry. Her industry in getting us invited places was absolutely unremitting. Before she got through with us we were quite *au courant* at all the great houses, I assure you.

MR. PEPYS

How kind of Lady Marjorie!

MRS. BLACKWELL

Yes. Just to show our gratitude, I gave her a cheque, and told her that John had made a venture on the stock market in her name.

MR. PEPYS

Very delicate of you!

MRS. BLACKWELL

The aristocracy are in such a bad way, my heart bleeds for them. But John would be furious if he knew it. He says he never intends to see her. And Edith dislikes her. She positively insulted her in London. Dear Marjorie is very forgiving. I should never speak to Edith again if I were Marjorie. Edith is so like John. I wonder if mortal woman ever struggled against such odds as Edith and John combined!

(*Telephone on table rings.* MRS. BLACKWELL *goes to it.*)

Hello! Who is it? Is that you, Adelaide? Dear Adelaide. How is the grand-aunt? I'm so sorry. My dear! Yes, I have a house party, a small one. Yes, dear! Lord Tredbury, of course you know him. No? He's charming, so *au fait*, so much the great noble, so completely what he ought to be. Who else? A dear old friend, Lady Marjorie Ticknor, granddaughter of the Duke of Kay, who was so kind to us in London. You will *love* her. She arrived quite unexpectedly.

(*A pause.*)

What time? At eight. Are you quite well, Adelaide? Good-by, dear.

(*Puts up the telephone.*)

Larry, it's Adelaide Townsend! She wants us all for dinner. Could anything be more opportune!

MR. PEPYS

Rather short notice, isn't it?

MRS. BLACKWELL

Her grand-aunt's on the point of death, she didn't think she'd live till dinner-time. I wouldn't give the snap of my finger for all the titles on the continent. Here comes Edith now.

(*Enter* EDITH.)

Oh, Edith, I have a surprise for you!

EDITH

Unpleasant, I suppose.

MRS. BLACKWELL

Why?

EDITH

Your surprises generally are.

MRS. BLACKWELL

(*To* PEPYS.)

There, Larry, isn't she the most exasperating girl you ever saw!

(*To* EDITH.)

Lady Marjorie Ticknor's here.

EDITH

Lady Marjorie Ticknor?

MRS. BLACKWELL

Yes. She arrived unexpectedly from Newport this afternoon.

EDITH

(*Thinking of the letter she has seen, laughs.*)

MRS. BLACKWELL

I try to do my whole duty by you. I take you out in London, and I have the aristocracy here, and you treat them abominably. You fling your chances to the winds. You were horribly rude to Lady Marjorie in London. I'm quite surprised she comes here at all.

(PEPYS *walks on terrace, discreetly, during this speech.*)

EDITH

Then you don't know Lady Marjorie.

MRS. BLACKWELL

I won't allow you to exasperate me.

(*With sudden appeal.*)

Edith, do be nice to her. She is an old friend of Tredbury's. They belong to the same set, you know, — the only set worth knowing in England. As for Lord Tredbury, I've quite lost my heart to him. And it says in the Peerage that he's descended from the first baron, who came over with Samuel the Conqueror.

EDITH

It seems quite wonderful.

MRS. BLACKWELL

(*Confused.*)

What?

EDITH

His descent. No wonder there isn't much left, now that he has arrived at the bottom.

MRS. BLACKWELL

Oh, dear, we are wasting so much time, and I don't know what to say to you — how to appeal

to you. Young girls know so little of life, are so slow to see where their advantage and happiness lies. And, until very lately, we've always been so *bourgeois* in America. We have always allowed silly, youthful inclinations to govern that most important of all matters — marriage. Now my dear —

(*Looking meaningly at* EDITH.)

there's no use mincing things. Lord Tredbury has come over here to get a wife.

EDITH

I should never have guessed it! Are there none left in England?

MRS. BLACKWELL

Edith, this bitterness is very unnatural at your age. Lord Tredbury is doing quite the usual and honorable thing. In order to keep up an aristocracy, you know, there must be money.

EDITH

And the way the money is obtained makes no particular difference. His ancestors fought for it, he marries for it. Both are equally dangerous.

MRS. BLACKWELL

Edith, if you only *could* be brought to realize your opportunity. Tredbury is half in love with you already — I can see that. And he is everything that could be desired in a husband — imposing, and all that, and — you know, it isn't at all good form to have brains nowadays.

EDITH

I shouldn't allow brains to interfere if I loved him, Grace.

MRS. BLACKWELL

(*Interrupting.*)

Love! Oh, my dear, that isn't necessary in a modern marriage, when one need never see anything of one's husband.

(*Approaching* PEPYS, *and calling to him.*) Larry, I want to show you the new terra-cotta vases which came to-day.

(*Exit, with* PEPYS, *upper Right, as* BARKING, *in evening clothes, enters lower Left.*)

EDITH

(*Remaining seated, and looking up to him quizzically, but calmly.*)

Well?

BARKING

(*Obviously nervous: putting in his eyeglass.*)

I say, what a jolly place, you know!

EDITH

It doesn't seem very jolly just now.

BARKING

What do you mean?

EDITH

(*With a swift look.*)

It's rather quiet, just you and I. Isn't it?

BARKING

Ah, delightfully so.

(*Goes over and sits near her.*)

You have such — er — a bewitching way of putting things, Miss Blackwell. I'm awfully glad I came.

EDITH

(*Abruptly.*)

Poor Mr. Barking.

BARKING

(*Starting and dropping his eyeglass.*)
Why do you say that?

EDITH

Because I feel it. It was mean to leave him alone on the landing.

BARKING

(*Relieved: laughing.*)
I say, your stepmother gave him a beastly snub, didn't she?

EDITH

(*Severely.*)
It seems to amuse you. If he were my friend, I should feel differently.

BARKING

(*Laughs.*)
There is — er — there is a kind of a joke connected with all this. I am sure you would laugh if you knew it. A deuced good joke on — on Barking.

EDITH

(*Gazing off, absently.*)
Oh, on Mr. Barking!

BARKING

(*Looks at her suspiciously.*)
Certainly. Why not?

EDITH

What is the joke?

BARKING

Well — er — I came here, and he didn't.
(*Laughs heartily, suddenly looks at* EDITH, *and stops.*)
Don't you think it funny?

EDITH

(*Gravely.*)
It must be your English sense of humor.

BARKING

I say, he'd give his boots to be here with you.

EDITH

They looked very nice.

BARKING

(*Mystified.*)
What?

EDITH

His boots.

BARKING

I say, but you are jolly!

(*Sits down near her.*)

I rather stole a march on him, you know.

EDITH

That remains to be seen.

BARKING

(*Intensely.*)

I say, I'll tell you something.

(*Leans towards her.*)

I came because you were here.

EDITH

(*Leaning towards him.*)

Do you know, I guessed it.

BARKING

(*Enchanted.*)

Really, now. I — I hoped you did.

(*A pause, as if making up his mind how to go on.*)

Er — I say, Miss Blackwell — er — you don't care anything about titles, do you?

EDITH

Why?

BARKING

You didn't strike me as a person who would.

EDITH

(*Gazing at him.*)
I don't care anything about *your* title.

BARKING

(*Starting.*)
Er — I beg pardon.
(*Evidently reassured by her expression.*)
By jove, you have a subtle way of putting things. Er — suppose now, merely for the sake of argument, I were not Lord Tredbury, but plain Mr. Barking —

EDITH

It would make no difference to me.

BARKING

Eh! By jove, wouldn't it?

EDITH

You would always be the same to me.

BARKING

I say, should I? How strange! From the moment I saw you, I have had the same feeling — er — about you. Er — Miss Blackwell — no revelation I could make about myself would change — er — would change your feelings towards me?

EDITH

None.

BARKING

(*Flustered.*)

I was about to say — er — coming back to this — er — Mr. Barking — er — his governor — his father may have a title in the near future, — which would descend to him.

EDITH

How interesting!

(*Giving him a look.*)

But I am not especially interested in Mr. Barking.

BARKING

Er — of course not.

(*Enter, Left, two powdered* FOOTMEN, *who begin to tidy up the porch. Enter, Right,* MRS. BLACKWELL *and* MR. PEPYS.)

MRS. BLACKWELL

(*Looks at* EDITH *and* BARKING *with approval, and then coughs discreetly.* BARKING *starts away from* EDITH *and rises.* EDITH *does not move.*)

Edith, dear, aren't you dressed yet? But it never takes you long. Dear Lord Tredbury, you must excuse this camp. It is *so* primitive. We come here once a year to lead a simple life. We Americans are so restless, you know, we are just learning the value of repose.

BARKING

Er — quite so.

(*Glancing at the* FOOTMEN.)

But — er — I shouldn't call this precisely primitive, my dear lady.

MRS. BLACKWELL

Of course, we have to have *some* comforts. By the way, Lord Tredbury, a dear friend of mine has arrived quite unexpectedly. You must know her — Lady Marjorie Ticknor. She is in your set, of course.

BARKING

(EDITH *watching him.*)

Er — er — Lady Marjorie Ticknor!

(EDITH *rises and crosses over to* PEPYS, *whom she punches.* PEPYS *does not understand.*)

MRS. BLACKWELL

Here she is now.

(*Enter* LADY MARJORIE TICKNOR. *She is perhaps twenty-seven, tall, and the least trifle angular, a defect which she tries to overcome in her gowns, with the careless but engaging manners of one who has had to make her own way.* MRS. BLACKWELL *runs to her, kisses her on the cheek, which* MARJORIE *presents.*)

Dear Marjorie! I'm charmed to see you! And to think of your telegraphing to Ead's Centre! My dear! I've such a surprise for you. Here's Lord Tredbury!

MARJORIE

(*Looking at* BARKING *through her lorgnette.*)

Lord Tredbury!

(*Instantly perceiving that it is* BARKING, *she claps her hand over her mouth to stifle a laugh, a muffled sound escaping.* BARKING, *agonized, bows, muttering, and puts in his monocle.*

MRS. BLACKWELL *gazes mystified from one to the other, and* EDITH, *remaining seated in a corner of the porch, looks on in quiet but real delight.*)

MRS. BLACKWELL

(*Uneasily.*)

I hope you haven't quarrelled. You know him, of course.

MARJORIE

(*Recovering.*)

Rather.

(*Goes over and takes the astounded* BARKING'S *hand. Nonchalantly, yet looking at him with eyes full of amusement.*)

I heard you landed, Tredbury. By the way, you had somebody with you, didn't you? Oh, I know, it was a Mr. Barking. I've listened to him in the House. Talks well, will make his mark, and all that.

(*Gazing around.*)

Where is he?

BARKING

(*Horribly embarrassed.*)

He — er — that is —

MRS. BLACKWELL

The fact is, Marjorie —

EDITH

(*Rising and crossing over: carelessly.*)
The fact is, that Grace snubbed him.

MARJORIE

Snubbed him? Grace snubbed —
(*Glances at* BARKING, *and puts her hand over her mouth to prevent another laugh escaping.* MRS. BLACKWELL *looks daggers.*)

EDITH

Yes, for wrestling with me.

MARJORIE

Wrestling with you?

EDITH

That was partly the reason.

MARJORIE

Partly?

MRS. BLACKWELL

(Wildly.)

Marjorie, I couldn't — Edith!

(LADY MARJORIE *pays no attention to* MRS. BLACKWELL, *but continues to look at* EDITH *through her lorgnette.*)

EDITH

Yes. There was some objection about his being china. Grace said if he had been a brewer, it would have been different. But china — I suppose she thought if I wrestled with him too much, he might smash. So she wouldn't invite him here, and left him on the landing.

MARJORIE

Oh!

MRS. BLACKWELL

(On the verge of tears.)

Dear Marjorie! Edith is quite incorrigible, you know. I don't know what our young girls are coming to. She is mad about athletics, and I suppose she led this — Mr. Barking on. I hadn't invited him here, and as Lord Tredbury —

(Indicating BARKING.)

didn't seem to make a point of it — I — we came without him.

MARJORIE

(*Laughing.*)

Quite so.

MRS. BLACKWELL

(*Gaining confidence.*)

Besides, I had no reason to believe he wished to come. I imagine he is very comfortable at Tipton's. It is a commendable hotel.

MARJORIE

(*Carelessly: dropping her lorgnette.*)

I daresay he is well enough off. I quite understand. Of course, he may be Prime Minister some day.

(BARKING *starts violently.* EDITH *laughs.*)

MRS. BLACKWELL

Really! You don't mean it!

MARJORIE

He is very clever — quite a coming man. I believe we are much more democratic in England than you are.

(*Lifting her glasses, and gazing off over the lawn towards the lake.*)

What a wonderful country!

(*Meaningly, to* BARKING.)

Come and talk to me, Tredbury. I haven't seen you for ages.

(*Barking joins her, and they go down Right.* PEPYS, EDITH, *and* MRS. BLACKWELL *make another group, down Left.*)

MRS. BLACKWELL

Edith, I'll never forgive you, never. I do everything to get you on in the world, and you reward me by humiliation. Oh, what will Lady Marjorie think? You are always rude to her.

EDITH

(*Watching* BARKING *and* MARJORIE.)

But you tell me it is good form to be rude, Grace.

(*Exit* MRS. BLACKWELL, *in a dudgeon, into the house.*)

PEPYS

(*Amused.*)

Poor Grace! Edith, you must be inhabited by a sprite. And what were you punching me for?

EDITH

(*Looking at him.*)

Larry, you're a very comfortable person.

PEPYS

Are you recalling the days when you used to sit on my lap?

EDITH

Not exactly. But I would just as soon do it now. I think it would be eminently safe.

PEPYS

It might be — for you.

EDITH

Don't be a humbug. I can't help confiding in you. Larry — no one can — But you mustn't tell.

PEPYS

No. What is it?

EDITH

(*Pointing at* BARKING.)

Well, that isn't Lord Tredbury.

(*This conversation sinks into dumb show. From time to time* PEPYS *evinces signs of great merriment and surprise, due to what* EDITH *is telling him.*)

MARJORIE

I've often seen your name in the *Morning Post*, and wondered what you were like.

BARKING

How very odd! I've had the same experience.

MARJORIE

Do you know, it was very clever of you to think of this joke on the Blackwells, and rather daring to carry it out. I admire those qualities in a man.

BARKING

Do you think so? By Jove! Before you arrived I was on the point of telling them all about it.

MARJORIE

Really? Why?

BARKING

(*Glancing at* EDITH.)

Er — I had — er — qualms of conscience, and that sort of thing, you know.

MARJORIE

My dear Mr. Barking, aren't you oversensitive? Why, the situation is "killing," as our American friends would say. An eager and

scheming heiress, a more eager and scheming stepmother, and you as Lord Tredbury.

(*Touching him on the arm.*)

What could be more delightful!

BARKING

What, by Jove?

MARJORIE

(*With a side glance.*)

Do you know, I believe you are something of a devil. Haven't I heard tales?

BARKING

Well — er — I've had my fling, of course, Lady Marjorie.

MARJORIE

That's what you men call it — a fling. Well, this is a master-stroke.

BARKING

(*Flattered.*)

Do you really think so?

MARJORIE

(*Tapping him.*)

Oh, I knew you were quite Satanic, let us say, the moment I laid eyes on you.

BARKING

I say, but you are clever — er — to have recognized me, and all that sort of thing.

MARJORIE

Recognize you! I listened a whole hour in the Ladies' Gallery of the House to a speech of yours once, enthralled. And when I was confronted with you to-day, as Lord Tredbury, I saw at once what had happened, with your reputation for doing bright things and all that. It was not very clever of me.

BARKING

Er — I think it was deuced clever — if you don't mind.

MARJORIE

I don't mind. And what deviltry is Tredbury up to? You and he are two of a sort, I rather think.

BARKING

Oh, he got your letter.

MARJORIE

Did he read it?

BARKING

Yes. And by the way, he said there were — ahem — some rather nice things about me in it.

MARJORIE

Yes?

(*Hastily.*)

There were. I hope he didn't show them to you.

BARKING

Oh, no!

(*A pause. Then he laughs.*)

I say, Tredbury thinks Miss Blackwell is Dotty Davenport, the actress.

MARJORIE

How did he get that notion?

BARKING

I told him. Miss Blackwell looks quite a bit like Dotty, you know. And — er — I believe you described her to Tredbury as unattractive — hoidenish — something of that sort.

MARJORIE

Yes. When you know her better you will see what I mean. Well?

BARKING

Well, he called her Miss Davenport, and she fell into the joke, and he thinks she is visiting here with Miss Blackwell.

MARJORIE

What a situation!

(*Laughs.*)

What a joke on every one but —

(*Looking up at him.*)

you and me.

BARKING

By jove, that's so! But how will it end? That's what I want to know.

MARJORIE

(*Tapping him.*)

You mischievous man! You are playing your part magnificently. I'll do mine, never fear.

(*Their conversation sinks into dumb show.*)

EDITH

"Hoidenish — unattractive — impossible," I have the letter here.

(*Shows it.*)

You ought to hear what she says about *him* in it.

(*Indicating* BARKING.)

PEPYS

Edith, you're too much for me. What are you going to do about all this?

EDITH

Nothing. Just let things happen.

(*Enter* MRS. BLACKWELL, *lower Left. She glances at* MARJORIE and BARKING *through her lorgnette.*)

PEPYS

(*To* EDITH.)

Things are likely to happen. I'm — I'm coming back.

(*Exit,* MR. PEPYS, *upper Left.*)

MRS. BLACKWELL

(*To* EDITH.)

Can she be making love to him?

EDITH

Possibly. It's quite easy.

MRS. BLACKWELL

Edith, how do you know?

(*Across to* MARJORIE.)

I'm so glad you have found a friend, dear.

EDITH

It *is* extraordinary.

MARJORIE

(*Suppressing laughter.*)

Lord Tredbury has been most amusing. I — I think it must be the climate.

MRS. BLACKWELL

Edith, you must dress. We are dining at the Grant Townsends. I hope Lord Tredbury will amuse me.

(*At this moment, a young* REPORTER *with a hand camera enters, upper Right, and approaches the party. All turn to look at him,* MRS. BLACKWELL *and* LADY MARJORIE *through lorgnettes,* BARKING *through his monocle. The young man has a keen, eager face, is dressed in a sack suit and felt hat, white collar, etc. He comes on, undaunted by the stares.*)

How did this person get in? I've given the strictest orders to allow no tourists in the grounds.

REPORTER

(*Approaching undaunted, and singling out* BARKING.)

Am I addressing Lord Tredbury?

BARKING

(*Glancing fearfully at* MRS. BLACKWELL.)

Er — really — I —

REPORTER

(*Coolly.*)

Thank you. I thought so.

(EDITH *laughs.*)

BARKING

(*Taking a step back.*)

But I haven't said so.

REPORTER

It isn't necessary. Glad to make your acquaintance. My name is Clarkson, of the New York *Republic.*

(*Takes a step forward, draws a card from his pocket, and holds it out to* BARKING.)

BARKING

(*Gazes at the card helplessly through his glass, and takes a step backward.*)

Thanks very much, but — er — I don't think I care for it, you know.

REPORTER

(*With an injured but brisk air, restores the card to his pocket.*)

I hope you don't mind answering a few questions, — the public is interested in the titled Englishmen who come to our shores.

MRS. BLACKWELL

May I ask how you got here, Mr. — Mr. —?

REPORTER

Clarkson. Certainly. I came from New York this morning. I am always sent on these important stories. On Wednesday I went to Philadelphia on the Oliver divorce scandal, yesterday there was a sensational murder in New Jersey, and to-day came a telegram that Lord Tredbury had left Tipton's Hotel to visit you.

MRS. BLACKWELL

Really, I can't allow Lord Tredbury to be annoyed. The *English* aristocracy do not understand this sort of thing.

(*To* BARKING.)

Dear Lord Tredbury, under our unfortunate — Constitution — I suppose you would call it —

we have no rights of privacy. Alas, we have no court journal, no nice dignified *Morning Post*, or anything of that sort.

(*To* REPORTER: *with hauteur.*)

You may say that Lord Tredbury and Lady Marjorie Ticknor are my guests, that we are dining to-night, most informally, with Mr. and Mrs. Grant Townsend.

REPORTER

(*Writing rapidly: to* BARKING.)

But surely you wouldn't mind telling the readers of the *Republic* the object of your journey to this country, Lord Tredbury?

BARKING

I assure you, my dear fellow, I am here with no — er — mysterious — object whatsoever. Just for a visit.

(*Looks from one to the other of the group, as if in vindication.*)

Just for a visit.

(EDITH *laughs.*)

MRS. BLACKWELL

Just for a visit.

REPORTER

(*Persistently.*)

There is a rumor that Cupid is responsible for the visit.

BARKING

Oh, I say!

EDITH

How wicked of Cupid!

MRS. BLACKWELL

(*Horror-struck.*)

Edith!

REPORTER

(*Smiling.*)

Cupid brings a great many of the British aristocracy to our shore, Miss Blackwell. And, it is said that we Americans, too, are gradually acquiring an aristocracy.

EDITH

I suppose you mean that we are acquiring the English aristocracy.

(*The* REPORTER *laughs.* MRS. BLACKWELL, LADY MARJORIE, *and* BARKING *have fallen into various attitudes.*)

MRS. BLACKWELL

(*On tenterhooks.*)

Edith, you *must* go and dress at once.

(*To* REPORTER.)

And I must ask you to excuse us, — Mr. — Mr. —

EDITH

(*To* REPORTER.)

I should merely say that Lord Tredbury appeared greatly embarrassed when the question was put to him, and remarked that his visit had no mysterious object whatever.

REPORTER

(*Writing rapidly.*)

You would make a success as a journalist, Miss Blackwell.

BARKING

Oh, by jove, you aren't writing that!

LADY MARJORIE

This is becoming painful, I should say. Grace, I think I'll take a turn with — with Tredbury before dinner.

MRS. BLACKWELL

Edith is so mischievous, you must pardon her. Oh, if John were only here! He is never here

when I want him, and always when I don't. I'll get Larry Pepys.

(*Exit into the house, Left.* BARKING *and* MARJORIE *cross over, Right. As they are about to exit the* REPORTER *slips down on the grass and levels his camera at them. Just as he is about to snap them,* EDITH, *who is beside him, by a deft Jiu Jitsu movement throws him off his balance, and very nearly upsets him.* MARJORIE *and* BARKING *exit, lower Right, without seeing this.*)

EDITH

(*Calmly.*)

I don't think I'd take pictures if I were you, Mr. Clarkson.

REPORTER

(*Regaining his feet, ruffled and astonished. Staring at her, rubbing his shoulder.*)

Did you do that?

EDITH

Yes.

REPORTER

You?

EDITH

Yes. There's no one else here to do it.

REPORTER

(*Staring.*)

Great Scott! How in — how *did* you do it?

EDITH

It's very simple — only one has to be a little careful not to break the other person's collar-bone.

REPORTER

To break —

(*Rubs his shoulder.*)

I — I feel as if a paving block had hit me.

EDITH

I'm sorry. I tried to be as gentle as I could.

REPORTER

Gentle!

(*Begins to laugh, admiringly.*)

I don't care to get into trouble with you, Miss Blackwell.

EDITH

(*Calmly.*)

It won't be necessary, I hope.

REPORTER

Won't be necessary!

EDITH

Not if you do what I tell you. You mustn't publish anything about myself or my family, or about Lord Tredbury.

REPORTER

But what am I to say to my paper?

EDITH

Telegraph them that you were unexpectedly injured in the performance of your duty. Go back to the village, and if there is any news, I promise you you shall have it. Good-by, Mr. Clarkson.

REPORTER

(*Admiringly.*)
Well, I'll risk it, for you. I'll call to-morrow.
(*As he exits, upper Left,* PEPYS *saunters in, Right.*)

PEPYS

Hello, Edith, not dressed yet? Your father and Hiram Peters have just driven up with a bunch of game cocks, and if I'm not mistaken, your father has the real Tredbury with him.
(*Looks around, Left.*)
They are coming now.

EDITH

(*Laughing.*)

I must go, Larry, — remember I'm an actress — for the present, unless he has found out from Dad.

PEPYS

(*Waves his hand, laughing.*)

All right. You're a vixen.

(*Exit* EDITH, *lower Right. Enter, upper Right, from behind the corner of the house,* MR. BLACKWELL *in his linen duster,* LORD TREDBURY, *and* HIRAM PETERS, *followed by a powdered* FOOTMAN *holding out gingerly a small coop of game cocks. During the following scene,* TREDBURY *peers around into the house, as if looking for* EDITH.)

MR. BLACKWELL

(*To* TREDBURY.)

Here we are, Mr. Barking. Make yourself at home; this is my house. Come on, Hiram.

(*To* PEPYS.)

Hello, Larry, I want you to know Mr. Barking. Mr. Barking, Mr. Pepys.

(*The two men shake hands,* PEPYS *smiling slightly with quiet amusement.*)

You know Hiram Peters, the sheriff of Carroll County.

(PETERS *and* PEPYS *shake hands.*)

Hiram and I were pals before any of this tom-foolishness was ever dreamed of. This isn't what we used to call a camp, eh — Hiram? Used to fancy chickens then, too. I guess that's the only youthful passion we've got left.

HIRAM

(*Solemnly: awed by his surroundings.*) The child's the father of the man, John.

(*All this time the* FOOTMAN *is gravely but gingerly holding the crate.* HIRAM *peers into it.*)

MR. BLACKWELL

Well, Larry, I drove around by the wharf, and there was Mr. Barking, and night coming on. Grace left him there stranded. What do you think of that?

(PEPYS *makes a comical gesture.*)

It's a good thing I reserved one wing of this "camp" for my own guests. I don't care a doughnut whether they've got titles or not.

(*Putting his hand on* TREDBURY'S *shoulder.*)

I said to him, "Just jump into the buggy between Hiram and me, and come up, and you needn't ever see Mrs. Blackwell and her house parties." My guests generally don't. What's the house party doing to-night, Larry?

PEPYS

Going to dine at the Townsends', I believe.

MR. BLACKWELL

That's good — that's capital. We'll have the place to ourselves and dine out here on this porch. What do you say?

TREDBURY

Splendid!

MR. BLACKWELL

(*To* FOOTMAN.)

Here, you, just tell the butler to set the table for two out here, right away.

FOOTMAN

Very good, sir.

(*Sets down the crate, and exits, Left.*)

MR. BLACKWELL

I never can get used to these flunkeys. Lord, Larry, didn't he look funny with that crate of chickens? Eh, Hiram?

HIRAM

(*Shaking his head.*)
Wahn't what you'd call a natural affinity.
(*Picks up the chicken coop.*)
Guess I'll take 'em along out to the barns. I reckon if your wife was to find me here, on the porch, she'd get tarin' mad.

MR. BLACKWELL

Hold on, Hiram, I'll go with you. I'm afraid those cocks might accidentally get to fighting, and you know I won't have that.
(*Enter* BUTLER *and* FOOTMAN *to set the table. To* FOOTMAN.)
When Mr. Barking gets ready to go up, show him to the room next to mine.

FOOTMAN

Very good, sir.
(*Exit* HIRAM, *carrying the chickens, and* MR. BLACKWELL.)

PEPYS

(*Handing his cigarette case.*)
Have a cigarette — Mr. Barking.

TREDBURY

(*Looks at him keenly, but with a slight smile.*)
Thanks very much.
(BUTLER *and* FOOTMAN *busy themselves setting the table.*)

PEPYS

(*After a pause, which is a trifle awkward, both men lighting cigarettes.*)
Pretty place, isn't it?

TREDBURY

Ah, very —
(*A pause.*)
Do you happen to know whether Miss Dotty Davenport is staying here? Mr. Blackwell didn't seem to know much about her. He says he doesn't ever see his wife's guests.
(*Exit* BUTLER *and* FOOTMAN, *having set the table.*)

PEPYS

(*Trying to be solemn.*)

Ahem!

(*Aside.*)

What the devil am I to say —

(*Peers off Left: relieved.*)

I believe there is some one coming. Excuse me.

(*Strolls off to upper Right and looks over balustrade toward the lake,* TREDBURY *looking after him, as* EDITH *enters, Left, dressed in a very simple dinner gown.*)

TREDBURY

(*Turning quickly.*)

Ah, there you are! I was just trying to find out from that chap if you were here.

EDITH

If I was here?

TREDBURY

I thought you might have been chaffing me; Mr. Blackwell didn't seem to know much about you. I came up to see you, you know.

EDITH

How in the world did you get here?

TREDBURY

Oh, Mr. Blackwell had pity on me. He's a deuced good sort. He brought a sheriff up with him and they talked chickens all the way. It seems he picks his own guests without regard to — er —

EDITH

Titles?

TREDBURY

(*Laughing.*)

He seems to have some such prejudice.

EDITH

Aren't you afraid of Mrs. Blackwell?

TREDBURY

I'm to keep on the other side of the house, you know. But when am I to see you?

EDITH

I'll give you a piece of advice. Don't let Mrs. Blackwell see you here — to-night, at all events.

TREDBURY

If you like, of course. But why?

EDITH

She'd be very angry with me. And I'm — on her side of the house, you know. If you see any one coming, you must run.

TREDBURY

(*Indicating* PEPYS.)
How about that chap?

EDITH

Mr. Pepys. Oh, he's in my confidence. He's an old friend.

TREDBURY

Nothing more?

EDITH

Of course not.

TREDBURY

I say — when shall I see you? Wouldn't it be jolly if I were to dine here,
(*Indicates table.*)
with you, instead of the old party?

EDITH

Very, but I think you are rather cool to come up after you've been snubbed. What would you have done if — if Mr. Blackwell hadn't found you?

TREDBURY

Oh, I should have managed. Tell me, when *am* I to see you?

EDITH

I'll come to the window and wave to you once in a while. You'll have a very good time with the "old party." He plays golf, you know, and you might teach him Jiu Jitsu. Good-by.

TREDBURY

Good-by?

EDITH

Yes. Some one's coming, you must go.

TREDBURY

Where?

EDITH

To — to your own wing.

TREDBURY

But when am I to see you?

EDITH

Never — if you don't obey me. Come, I'll show you the way.

(*Exit, upper Left, followed by* TREDBURY. *Enter, lower Left,* BARKING *and* MARJORIE.)

BARKING

But I say, the beastly freedom of these chaps. I didn't at all count on having a reporter.

MARJORIE

(*Interrupting.*)

You dealt with him very cleverly. I can imagine you treating aspirants for office like that when —

(*Looking up at him.*)

you are Prime Minister.

BARKING

Prime Minister, I say; I can't quite tell you what a strange effect you have on me, Lady Marjorie. You quite make me tingle with — er — ambition.

(*Enter, Left,* EDITH *and* MRS. BLACKWELL, *and* MR. PEPYS *comes forward.*)

MRS. BLACKWELL

Dear Marjorie, have you got a shawl?

(*Seeing the table set.*)

Who's going to dine here?

(EDITH *laughs, and looks at* PEPYS.)

EDITH

Dad has Hiram Peters with him.

MRS. BLACKWELL

(*Sighing.*)

Hiram Peters! John has the most senseless ideas of equality. To think of dining here with Hiram Peters.

EDITH

I wish I were going to, — he's much more interesting than Grant Townsend.

MRS. BLACKWELL

Edith, you're positively anarchistical. Why did you put on that gown? It makes you look like a village belle. And where are your pearls?

(*Sighs.*)

EDITH

I'm going to paddle Lord Tredbury across the lake. You may go in the launch.

MRS. BLACKWELL

(*Mollified.*)

I suppose you wouldn't be happy unless you were exercising. And it will be a new experience

for Lord Tredbury — an Adirondack canoe at sunset. Don't be late!

(*Exit, Left,* MRS. BLACKWELL, PEPYS, MARJORIE.)

EDITH

You seem to be quite intimate with Lady Marjorie.

BARKING

(*Aside.*)

By jove, she's jealous!

(*Aloud.*)

Yes, I've always been fond of — er — of Marjorie, you know.

(*Lights a cigarette.*)

EDITH

Interesting — if true! But let's go down to the lake. If you have any money in your pockets, take it out and put it in your lap.

BARKING

I say, would you mind telling me the reason?

EDITH

And, by the way, don't smoke your cigarette on one side, even for an instant. I hope you swim well.

BARKING

Oh, by jove, is it as bad as that?

EDITH

Then you could rescue me. Wouldn't that be romantic? The lake is fed by springs, and the water's deliciously cold.

(*Enter* BUTLER *and* FOOTMAN.)

BARKING

If I'd known that now, I'd have worn a bathing suit.

(*Laughs confidently.*)

I think I can manage a canoe — I used to row a bit at Oxford, you know.

(*Exit* EDITH, *upper Left, followed dubiously by* BARKING.)

FOOTMAN

(*Setting dishes at a side table.*)

I s'y, Stetson, 'e's a rum one for a lord, 'e is. 'E ain't got no cornets nor nothin' on 'is shirts. An' the other one, Mister Barking, did you 'ear 'im a-callin' of Miss Edith Dotty Davenport?

BUTLER

She's allus up to some devilment, Lord bless 'er. If it wasn't for 'er, I wouldn't stay in this 'ouse a blessed minute.

(*Enter, Right,* MR. BLACKWELL *and at the same time, Left,* LORD TREDBURY.)

MR. BLACKWELL

Oh, here you are, Barking! Sit down.

(*Sits down at table, and waves* TREDBURY *to a seat opposite.*)

Well, this is cosey, ain't it, all by ourselves, with that cussed house party out of the way?

(BUTLER *and* FOOTMAN *begin to serve them.*)

TREDBURY

Very.

MR. BLACKWELL

That's right. These house parties never turn over till ten, and then some of 'em breakfast in bed, — a slovenly habit, sir. I always got up early — shouldn't be where I am now if I hadn't. This place is glorious in the morning, sir, glorious. We'll breakfast here about seven o'clock, say. How does that strike you?

TREDBURY

Delightful!

MR. BLACKWELL

Good. At seven-fifteen my buggy will be at the door and I'll show you this country. We'll make a day of it. I'll drive you over to Ead's Centre, and let you see the house where I was born.

TREDBURY

You're very kind.

MR. BLACKWELL

Not at all. Then we'll go to Walker's Corners, and I'll show you where I made my first start in life, — sweeping out a store. Store's there yet. I daresay your own father began that way.

TREDBURY

You mustn't have me on your mind, you know. I'm quite content here — er — keeping out of the way of the house party.

MR. BLACKWELL

Glad to do it. I want you to enjoy yourself. You found your room all right — did Stetson show you?

TREDBURY

Miss Davenport showed me. I am next to you, I think.

MR. BLACKWELL

Who the devil is this Miss Davenport, and how did she know?

(BUTLER *and* FOOTMAN *turn their backs to laugh.*)

TREDBURY

She appeared somewhat familiar with your side of the house.

MR. BLACKWELL

(*With vehemence.*)

I never saw the woman, sir; I give you my word I never saw her.

TREDBURY

(*Polite, but unbelieving.*)

I found the view very fine from my window.

MR. BLACKWELL

I'd like to know what this Davenport woman has got to do with my rooms.

TREDBURY

I think that she, too, rather liked the view from that side.

MR. BLACKWELL

She's a designing hussy, sir, I warn you to be careful. But you won't have much chance to see her. I confess I don't grasp the principle on which these house parties are made up,—an actress, a lord who hasn't anything but mortgages to his name, and I daresay wants to marry my daughter. By thunder, he shan't have her, sir. A plain business man, such as you, sir, is good enough for me. I've heard all my life of your father's china plant, and I've a great admiration for any one who can build up such a concern. I'd like to know something of the details of the business. I suppose it's incorporated?

TREDBURY

Oh, yes, thoroughly incorporated.

MR. BLACKWELL

What is the amount of your capital?

TREDBURY

The fact is, I don't quite remember.

MR. BLACKWELL

(*Swallowing.*)
Don't remember?

TREDBURY

You see, I'm — er — in Parliament. My father rather wanted me to be a public man.

MR. BLACKWELL

A great mistake. I'd have put you in the business. Now, for instance —

(*Exit* BUTLER, *and enter, Right, in a leisurely fashion,* HIRAM.)

Why, Hiram, I thought you'd gone home. Changed your mind? That's good. Sit right down here and have some dinner.

HIRAM

No, I didn't come for that. Say, John, that little black and red cock we both liked has got kinder mixed up with the mottled one.

MR. BLACKWELL

(*Jumping.*)
What?

HIRAM

Thought ye might be interested.

MR. BLACKWELL

How long has this been going on? Excuse me, Mr. Barking, I'll be back presently.

(*Exit, precipitately, Right, carrying his napkin.*)

HIRAM

Kinder thought he'd like to know.

(*They both look after him. It is now deep twilight. Unperceived by either of them,* BARKING, *dripping, bedraggled, wet to the skin, carrying his coat, passes along the terrace back of the loggia, from Right to Left, and disappears.*)

You don't seem to take much to chickens, Mr. Barking.

(*Exit Right.* TREDBURY *sits down. Voices and a commotion are heard within the house, off Left, and enter* EDITH, *lower Left.* TREDBURY *rises in astonishment. Enter, Left,* BUTLER *and* FOOTMAN, *showing signs of merriment.*)

EDITH

Isn't it too bad? Lord Tredbury fell into the lake,

(*Ingenuously.*)

and there's no way of my keeping my dinner engagement at the Townsends'. They're telephoning.

TREDBURY

Tredbury — has fallen into the lake!

EDITH

Oh, I fished him out with the paddle. You see he was so sure that he could manage a canoe that I let him get in first. Perhaps I shouldn't have done it. He's gone up to change his clothes. I'm afraid they're ruined, and he can't afford to get any more, poor man; his tailors won't give him any more credit.

(*Glancing at the vacant seat.*)

May I have some dinner? I'm famished.

(*Sits down in* MR. BLACKWELL'S *chair, opposite to* TREDBURY'S, *and* BUTLER *hands her a dish.*)

TREDBURY

(*Transported.*)

Mr. Blackwell's called away to a cock fight. I hope it lasts forever.

EDITH

A cock fight?

TREDBURY

Providence, assisted, I suspect, by Hiram, has mixed up the black and red game cock with the mottled one. By jove, Dotty, Providence has been more than decent to shuffle off Tredbury into the lake, too, and transform me from an outcast on a wharf into Aladdin's palace, dining with you.

(*Hysteric signs of merriment from the* BUTLER *and* FOOTMAN. TREDBURY *lifts his glass.*)

Let's drink to the absent.

EDITH

(*Looking at him critically.*)

You're cleverer than I thought you were. Of course, that isn't saying a great deal.

TREDBURY

(*To the* BUTLER.)

Fill Miss Davenport's glass.

(BUTLER *has a spasm.*)

EDITH

I don't care for wine, — it puts one rather out of condition. But we might send some up to Lord Tredbury. I hope he won't take cold after his wetting.

TREDBURY

(*Laughing joyfully.*)

It serves him jolly well right.

(*Looking at her admiringly.*)

'Pon my word, Dotty, I believe you did it on purpose.

EDITH

(*Coolly.*)

Did what?

TREDBURY

Doused him.

(*Leaning forward.*)

I believe you did, so that we two could have an evening together. By jove, I'd like to have seen him pitching into the water. How did you manage it?

EDITH

By letting him do it himself. That's all one has to do with men — they'll drown themselves if one only provides the water —

(*Looking across at him.*)

or the wine.

TREDBURY

You'll catch it rather when Mrs. Blackwell comes home and finds out that you've wet — Lord Tredbury.

(*Laughs.*)

EDITH

Well, I hope the water didn't hurt his title any. That's the main thing, and it's still here. Water doesn't harm titles, does it?

TREDBURY

(*Laughing.*)

Mr. Blackwell was awfully squeamish about your showing me to my room.

EDITH

Who told him?

TREDBURY

I had to, he asked me. By the way, I said you seemed to know quite a bit about his side of the house, and he swore by all things he'd never heard of you. The old chap was quite worked up, vowed he took no stock in the noblemen and actresses and all that sort of trash his wife had here. What are you laughing at now?

EDITH

I'm very fond of — Mr. Blackwell.

TREDBURY

(*Annoyed.*)

Do you know, I thought he was foxing. He protested too much. But really, I can't see what

there is in the old boy to attract you. He's a good sort, and all that, of course.

EDITH

(*Calmly.*)
I love him —

TREDBURY

(*Starting back in his chair.*)
Oh, come now, Miss Davenport —

EDITH

— as a father, of course.

TREDBURY

(*Incredulously.*)
Why does he deny it?

EDITH

He probably thought you might doubt — the quality of my affection. He'll be back presently, and then —

TREDBURY

And then —

EDITH

I'll prove it.

(*The servants put the coffee on the table and exit, Left.*)

I have a piece of news for you. *You* had better be careful, Mr. Barking — Lady Marjorie's here.

TREDBURY

(*Starting.*)

Marjorie here! Marjorie! You say she's here. How the — how did she get here?

EDITH

She came by way of Ead's Centre, I believe. You seem to be quite intimate with her,— in spite of the fact that she only saw you once when everybody was leaving — and all that. Are you quite sure that there hasn't been some little affair? How am I to know she wasn't deceiving Lord Tredbury?

TREDBURY

'Pon my word, Dotty, there's nothing of that kind. Oh, I swear it. Nothing of that kind. I wouldn't marry her — not if she were the granddaughter of all the royalties in Europe. Don't you believe me?

EDITH

Well, I've seen her, and that makes me rather inclined to. I don't like your calling her by her first name.

TREDBURY

It was only because, well — because Tredbury does. What a nasty, characteristic thing for Marjorie to do — to leave Newport and come here. What the deuce could have put her up to it?

EDITH

Her hosts moved out, I suppose. I believe you're afraid of her.

TREDBURY

I? Oh, no. Where is she now?

EDITH

She's gone to dine at the Grant Townsends'.

TREDBURY

Would you mind telling me what happened when Tredbury met her?

EDITH

Well, she seemed rather surprised —

TREDBURY

Did she, eh? And he?

EDITH

He seemed considerably surprised. That was all. They talked awhile, and — if I remember rightly — Lady Marjorie said a number of pleasant things to Tredbury about you. That you were to be Prime Minister some day.

TREDBURY

(*Breaking into laughter.*)

Prime Minister!

(*Suddenly becoming sober.*)

Oh, did she? Nice of her, I'm sure. Don't let's talk about her any more, — time's too short. Dotty, how long are you going to stop with Mrs. Blackwell?

EDITH

Oh, indefinitely. How long are you going to stop with Mr. Blackwell?

TREDBURY

Until he puts me out. I'm afraid that'll be rather soon when he finds out — what great friends we are. Do you know, Dotty, I've never had precisely the same feeling about any one that I have about you. We've the same sense of humor, and all that.

(*Earnestly.*)

Could you care for me if I didn't have any money?

EDITH

(*Thoughtfully.*)

I haven't enough imagination to answer. The question is: Could you care for *me* if you didn't have any money? That's always what a woman wants to know.

TREDBURY

Dotty — since I met you, since —

EDITH

Since you wrestled with me.

TREDBURY

I'm not jesting. Since I met you, you've — Dotty — the whole world has changed.

(*He reaches across the table for her hand. She withdraws it.*)

Dotty, listen! Since I met you to-day you've become everything to me. What are you thinking of?

EDITH

I'm wondering what you had before that.

TREDBURY

Oh!

EDITH

(*Critically: looking at him.*)

There are many things about you I don't approve of.

TREDBURY

What?

EDITH

Well, first of all, your passion for actresses.

TREDBURY

Ah, but it isn't a passion for actresses, you know. I scarcely know how to describe it. I should have the same feelings if you were — er —

EDITH

An heiress?

TREDBURY

(*Starting.*)

Why do you say that?

(*Laughs.*)

Well, yes, only if you were an heiress, you'd be —

EDITH

Unattractive, hoidenish, impossible!

TREDBURY

Instead of the dearest little girl in the world.

EDITH

I don't like being called *little.*

TREDBURY

(*Leaning forward.*)

The old chap will be coming back now and making a row. When can I see you? He wants to take me off at some beastly hour to-morrow morning to Ead's Corners, or some place like that, in his buggy, to show me the spot where he was born. I believe he wants to keep me away from you. I wonder what he'd say if he knew?

EDITH

Knew what?

TREDBURY

How much I cared for you.

EDITH

(*Glancing off, Right, across the lawn, and rising.*)

Here he comes now. We might ask him.

TREDBURY

(*Rising: alarmed.*)

Dotty, what the deuce are you going to do? (*Enter, upper Right,* MR. BLACKWELL *in his shirt-sleeves, carrying his coat. He pauses when he sees* EDITH, *who runs to him, and they talk at the back of the stage in dumb show for a moment.* MR. BLACKWELL *pats* EDITH *on the cheek and exits, upper Left.*)

EDITH

(*Returning and resuming her seat: calmly.*)

He'll be down presently. I told him I'd eaten his dinner, but he doesn't seem to care. He says there is plenty more, and that the mottled bird won.

TREDBURY

(*Agitatedly.*)

Dotty, I don't at all like his tapping your cheek. You — er — don't know these old chaps as well as I do.

EDITH

(*Laughing.*)

I know this "old chap" better than you do.

TREDBURY

(*Sulkily: sitting down.*)

Of course it's none of my affair, but why did he tell me he didn't know you? He's a sly old fox. I think he knows you rather well.

(EDITH *laughs.*)

I can't make him out. He didn't seem to mind my being here with you.

(*Leaning forward.*)

See here, Dotty, he'll be coming back, now. When shall I see you? Can't you see that I'm mad about you?

EDITH

Yes, I can see it.

TREDBURY

I'm quite ready to chuck everything and stay in America and follow you round.

EDITH

What would you chuck?

TREDBURY

(*Laughing.*)

China, I suppose.

EDITH

If you chuck china, it breaks, doesn't it?

TREDBURY

Dotty, listen! Why do you torment me?
(*Reaching for her hand.*)
I love you —

(*Enter* MRS. BLACKWELL, *upper Left, and comes around behind* TREDBURY. *The lights are burning very low on the table, and when* MRS. BLACKWELL *sees* TREDBURY *reaching for* EDITH'S *hand, she pauses and coughs at some distance behind him, mistaking him for* BARKING.)

MRS. BLACKWELL

Well, *here* you are. You got word in time that Adelaide's grand-aunt died. I supposed you had. We went all the way over there, and the butler met us at the landing with the telegram in his hand, and we haven't had any dinner, and we're almost starved. Dear Lord Tredbury, I'm so glad *you* weren't put to such inconvenience.

TREDBURY

(*Rising, greatly flustered.*)
Er — thanks. I've dined quite comfortably, thanks.

(*An expression of horror crosses* MRS. BLACKWELL'S *face when she recognizes him, and she backs away.*)

We had — er — just reached the coffee.

MRS. BLACKWELL

(*Ignoring him — her voice shaking with anger: to* EDITH.)

Where is Lord Tredbury?

EDITH

(*Calmly.*)

The last I heard of him, he was changing his clothes.

MRS. BLACKWELL

Changing his clothes?

EDITH

Yes. He got wet. It didn't hurt his title any. He was quite careless getting into the canoe.

(TREDBURY *laughs.*)

MRS. BLACKWELL

(*With inarticulate anger.*)

Oh!

(*Pushes an electric bell: turns to* TREDBURY.)

And what are you doing here, may I ask, sir?

TREDBURY

(*Hugely embarrassed, glancing at* EDITH.)

Dining with Miss Davenport.

MRS. BLACKWELL

With Miss Davenport? With whom?
(*Enter* BUTLER.)

TREDBURY

(*Waves his hand helplessly at* EDITH.)
With Miss Davenport.
(BUTLER *chokes.*)

MRS. BLACKWELL

When I saw you — ahem — wrestling with Miss Blackwell, I had reason to suspect this afternoon, Mr. Barking, that you were not in your right mind. Now I am sure of it. At any rate,
(*Glancing at the champagne.*)
that is the more charitable view.

TREDBURY

(*Petrified with horror.*)
Wrestling with — with Miss Blackwell!
(*Stares wildly at* EDITH.)
Are you — are you —
(*Collapses.*)
Oh, by jove!

MRS. BLACKWELL

(*To* BUTLER.)

Stetson, give his lordship my compliments, and say that I trust he feels no ill effects from his wetting.

(*Exit, lower Left, sweeping out.*)

EDITH

I'm sorry, but — I'm the unattractive person you read about. And I never acted in my life — until to-night.

(*She drops him a courtesy, and exits, lower Left,* TREDBURY *staring after her.*)

CURTAIN

ACT III

SCENE. *The drawing-room of Mr. Blackwell's camp. It is a large room, the wooden walls decorated with antlers, and finished in a very costly manner. It has a great, rough stone fireplace, middle Left, and a door on either side. Over the fireplace is a moose's head. In the rear there are three long windows, like French windows. Beyond these can be seen the terrace with balustrade, like that in the second act, and the lake and mountains beyond. Between two of the windows is a dainty writing desk. Down Right is a long table on which magazines and newspapers are arranged, and a telephone instrument. There is another window at lower Right which is supposed to lead out on the loggia shown in the second act.*

TIME: *About ten o'clock in the morning following the preceding act.*

AT RISE: LADY MARJORIE *is discovered looking languidly over the table of magazines, and* STETSON, *the butler, stands respectfully in the middle of the room.*

MARJORIE

I don't see *Truth.*

BUTLER

We don't 'ave it in the house, your ladyship.

MARJORIE

I might have known it. Or *La Vie Parisienne.*

BUTLER

I beg pardon, me lady.

MARJORIE

Where are the French papers?

BUTLER

Please, me lady, they are in Mrs. Blackwell's room.

MARJORIE

(*Picking up a silver cigarette box.*)
Stetson, I don't at all like these cigarettes.
(*Puts one in her mouth, and* STETSON *lights it.*)
Can't you find Mr. Pepys? He has some good ones — Melachrinos.

BUTLER

I'll try to find him, me lady.
(*Exit* STETSON, *lower Right. As he exits,* TREDBURY *is seen peering in through one of the windows. He*

starts, utters an ejaculation, looks all around the room, and enters just as LADY MARJORIE *is going to the desk, rear. They stop face to face.*)

TREDBURY

(*Exclaiming, indignantly.*)

I say, Marjorie, I don't see why you came here.

MARJORIE

(*Calmly.*)

The Windhams were leaving Newport; there didn't seem any other place to come.

TREDBURY

(*Looking around cautiously.*)

Is any one else about?

MARJORIE

Whatever's the matter with you?

TREDBURY

(*Fiercely.*)

Where's that ass?

MARJORIE

You mean your china friend who is representing you for the time being, I suppose. He's been in

bed since eight o'clock last evening, and I think he's afraid to come down. Awfully clever of you to send him up in your place, Treddy. But you should have seen him when he first met me! He had a frightful *quart d'heure.*

TREDBURY

(*Vehemently.*)

Confound him! Between the two of you, I shouldn't wonder if you'd ruined my life.

MARJORIE

Rubbish!

(*Sitting down: innocently.*)

What have I done?

TREDBURY

Why did you write me all that stuff about Miss Blackwell?

MARJORIE

Stuff? What did I say? Sit down, Treddy, and have a cigarette. There are some on the table. You might give me another; they're not very good.

TREDBURY

(*Angrily: handing her the cigarettes.*)

No, thanks. You said Miss Blackwell was un-

attractive, hoidenish, impossible. By jove, how could you?

MARJORIE

(*Lighting cigarette from the other one: ingenuously.*)

Isn't she? I thought she was. Of course, men are not as good judges of the opposite sex as women.

TREDBURY

Impossible! Unattractive! She's quite the most attractive girl I ever met.

MARJORIE

Oh, come now, Treddy, you don't mean quite that. Aren't you a bit dazzled by her millions?

TREDBURY

(*Angrily.*)

I thought she was an actress until last night.

MARJORIE

What made you change your opinion?

TREDBURY

Reggie told me she was an actress. Confounded clever of him! I must say that she played the part dashed well.

MARJORIE

(*Laughing.*)
Then Reggie ain't such a fool as he looks.

TREDBURY

How is it all going to end?
(*Fiercely.*)
I want you to tell me that.

MARJORIE

You must be in love with her, or you wouldn't be hanging around here like an escaped lunatic.

TREDBURY

I want to see her, tell her I've been an ass, and go away forever.

MARJORIE

It seems quite unnecessary, Treddy.
(*Laughs.*)
All you've got to do is to fall on your knees, confess you're Lord Tredbury, and she'll accept you before you have time to get up again.

TREDBURY

Accept me! She'd do nothing of the sort. You're — you're incapable of appreciating her.

And do you think I'd tell her who I am after what has happened? I'd cut my tongue out first. I simply want to apologize like —

MARJORIE

Like a china person. That's your rôle, isn't it?

TREDBURY

Like a decent chap, and then get out.

MARJORIE

Where will you go?

TREDBURY

I don't know — I don't care.

MARJORIE

Suppose you come to Lenox. I'll take your friend Barking there.

TREDBURY

(With feeling.)

I never want to see either of you again.

(Stops, listens, and goes toward the windows in the rear.)

MARJORIE

Where are you going?

TREDBURY

I'm — I'm not allowed in this part of the house.
(*Coming back, and addressing her in a tense voice.*)
I shouldn't at all wonder if you've ruined my life.
(*Exit rapidly, through rear windows.* MARJORIE *sinks into a chair, and begins to laugh. Enter* MRS. BLACKWELL, *lower Left. She has a letter in her hand.*)

MRS. BLACKWELL

Why, Marjorie dear, are you down? And it's only ten o'clock. I hate the morning. You have such a sensible custom in England of not facing it till lunch time. All the worries and perplexities of one's life come in the morning, and now I've had a letter from Sarah Hollingsworth that my cook is advertised on the billboards. It's the last straw, but I might have known that it would come.

MARJORIE

Your cook advertised on the billboards! What in the world do you mean?

MRS. BLACKWELL

Oh, as using some kind of porridge, or breakfast food, as it is vulgarly called. Sally says that the first time she saw it was from a car window, on a huge board in a swamp. My name caught her eye: "Mrs. John Blackwell's cook uses Manna." Manna! Nothing is sacred in America, not even the Bible, and poor, dear Antoine, — how he must relish being called a cook!

(*Sighs.*)

That is one of the penalties of belonging to the aristocracy.

MARJORIE

It seems so strange to have an aristocracy in a Republic. Doesn't the Constitution, or the Declaration of Rights, or whatever you have, forbid it?

MRS. BLACKWELL

My dear, how very English you are! *Our* aristocracy is founded on republican principles, and we have the right to be as arrogant as we choose. Any one who has sufficient discrimination and determination and *sang-froid* may belong. We are not encumbered by duties or responsibilities, and we have a code of our own.

MARJORIE

It's magnificent, but — is it an aristocracy?

MRS. BLACKWELL

Certainly.

MARJORIE

But there is no peerage or Almanac de Gotha. How is one to tell whether one belongs?

MRS. BLACKWELL

By the increased consideration one receives from people who profess not to believe in an aristocracy.

MARJORIE

Ah, I see. And having one's cook on the bill-boards is an outward and visible sign, I suppose.

MRS. BLACKWELL

(*Sighing.*)

I am not saying that we do not lack finish. We are a nation of barbarians, and we are suffering from morality.

MARJORIE

How very odd! I thought it was an English trait.

MRS. BLACKWELL

Oh, we have it, too. What may one expect of a people who make a cult of that crudest of sensations, patriotism? Who keep Decoration Day and the Fourth of July, for instance? And our men seldom run off with other men's wives.

MARJORIE

It isn't necessary, any more.

MRS. BLACKWELL

Have you seen Lord Tredbury?

(TREDBURY *is seen peering in.*)

MARJORIE

(*Absently.*)

Yes.

MRS. BLACKWELL

(*Turning: with interest.*)

He's come down?

MARJORIE

(*Laughing.*)

What did I say? Oh, no, I suppose he's still in bed.

MRS. BLACKWELL

(*Coming back, towards* MARJORIE.)

I sent a footman twice to his room this morning — he left his valet at Tipton's, you know.

(*Confidentially and tragically.*)

My dear Marjorie, nothing will convince me that Edith didn't upset him in the lake in order to come back and talk with that vulgar Barking.

(*With inspiration.*)

I've an idea! Dear Marjorie, why wouldn't he do for you?

MARJORIE

Did you say that vulgar Barking?

MRS. BLACKWELL

Oh, well, you know, there's no getting around it, — he is vulgar. He's done the most abominable things. Still, my dear, if he married you, you and the Duke could do wonders with him, — and, of course, you needn't see a great deal of him. You tell me he has a career in Parliament. He is visiting Mr. Blackwell, you know, and I believe I'll invite him to my side of the house.

(*Sighs.*)

I invite so few of Mr. Blackwell's guests to see me. But, Marjorie, I really think you ought to consider him. You'll pardon me for speaking

frankly, but the dear Duchess accomplishes such marvels by frankness.

MARJORIE

Invite him over by all means, Grace, — if you like.

MRS. BLACKWELL

Dear Marjorie, do consider him. I do so want to see you happily settled.

MARJORIE

Dear Grace, how kind of you to consider *me!*

(*Enter, lower Left,* EDITH.)

EDITH

Morning, Lady Marjorie. Hello, Grace!

(EDITH *catches sight of* TREDBURY *as he dodges away from the window, but does not betray the fact that she sees him. He makes frantic signs for her to come out.*)

MRS. BLACKWELL

(*A little embarrassed.*)

Edith, I'm thinking of asking Mr. Barking to visit me.

(MARJORIE *pretends to read.*)

EDITH

But I thought you didn't like him. You've been calling him vulgar and commercial and all sorts of things. Why this change of heart?

MRS. BLACKWELL

(*Nervously: glancing at* MARJORIE.)

Well, my dear, I suppose I was wrong, after all.

(*Sighing.*)

We must recognize the claims of commerce; we must admit that new blood is a good thing. Mr. Barking has behaved atrociously, but —

EDITH

But you said of him, Grace, that one cannot make a silk purse out of — baser materials.

MRS. BLACKWELL

Oh, my dear, it doesn't make so much difference about the purse so long as it's full. Lady Marjorie says he will make a name for himself.

EDITH

Oh, I see!

(*Glancing at* LADY MARJORIE, *who is pretending to read.*)

Oh, of course, if you are inviting him on Lady Marjorie's account —

MARJORIE

(*Sweetly.*)

Pray don't consider me. I am sure *I* don't want him.

MRS. BLACKWELL

Dear Marjorie, you are so lacking in worldliness.

(TREDBURY, *who has been peering in, disappears behind the wall.* MARJORIE'S *back is turned to him.*)

MARJORIE

I have no interest in Mr. Barking whatever.

EDITH

An interest in him might be rather a good thing — if it were paid quarterly.

MRS. BLACKWELL

(*Laughing.*)

Like alimony. Really, Edith, you are too bad. *You* seem to have taken quite a fancy to him.

EDITH

(*Glancing at* MARJORIE.)

There's quite a difference between wrestling with a man and marrying him.

MRS. BLACKWELL

I'm delighted to hear you say so.

(*Suddenly catches herself: glancing at* MARJORIE.)

MARJORIE

Oh, pray don't mind *me*, Grace. *I* have no intention of marrying him.

EDITH

Then, since Lady Marjorie doesn't want to marry him, why do you invite him?

MARJORIE

(*Pretending to read: bitterly.*)

I suppose of course there is no *other* reason.

MRS. BLACKWELL

Well, of course, if *neither* of you want him, I don't. I'm sure I should always draw the line at china. Only it wasn't very nice of you to

trifle with him that way, Edith. I suppose you only did it to annoy me.

(*Sighing.*)

I am quite used to that.

(TREDBURY *peers in.*)

I am glad he offended you; perhaps it will teach you a lesson.

(*Rising.*)

Dear Marjorie, I hope you are comfortable. The tea you ordered from New York will arrive to-night. And — isn't there any other little thing you would like?

MARJORIE

(*Rising.*)

Perhaps if you would let me take the French papers from your room, and if you would lend me your secretary to answer my letters —

MRS. BLACKWELL

Certainly, my dear, come with me. I do hope dear Lord Tredbury hasn't taken cold. Edith, I'll be down presently. I want to talk to you.

EDITH

Very well, I'll be here. I've got to write to the vet, and I can't remember whether his name is Hoskins or Hawkins. You don't happen to know?

MRS. BLACKWELL

Oh, my dear, how should I know?

(*Exit, lower Left, followed by* MARJORIE. EDITH *goes to the desk and sits down.* TREDBURY *peers cautiously in, looks around the room, enters, and stands before* EDITH.)

EDITH

(*Who has the tip of her pen in her mouth.*)

Good morning. I thought you'd gone off with Mr. Blackwell to see his birthplace. I'm trying to write to the vet, and I can't remember whether his name is Hoskins or Hawkins. Which do you think is the more likely?

TREDBURY

Miss Blackwell, I've come to say good-by to you.

EDITH

I supposed of course you'd gone.

TREDBURY

I couldn't go without seeing you again.

EDITH

Isn't it rather warm to start now?

TREDBURY

Warm! Did you say warm?

EDITH

I thought you were to start at seven, — Mr. Blackwell likes to get off early.

TREDBURY

Er — the fact is, we did start at seven. I escaped.

EDITH

Escaped!

TREDBURY

I've been here three hours waiting for a chance to speak to you. To tell the truth, I've been up practically all night.

EDITH

It doesn't sound practical, — it sounds dissipated. I hope my father didn't sit up with you.

TREDBURY

Sometime, perhaps, you'll understand. But I want to say that I made the mistake of my life.

EDITH

It must have been monumental. What is it?

TREDBURY

I can't tell you; I should be a cad if I did. I don't blame you for despising me, Miss Blackwell. You served me jolly well right, and I deserve it. And just a word: look out for that chap; I can't tell you why, but — look out for him. And I wouldn't have any more to do with Lady Marjorie than I could help. She's ruined my life.

EDITH

Not quite, I hope.

TREDBURY

(Taking a step nearer her.)

I should like you to know before I leave that my — my feeling for Miss Davenport was of the sincerest nature. Good-by!

EDITH

Mr. Blackwell will be very much disappointed.

TREDBURY

I've left him a line. The old boy is a trump —

I beg your pardon — your father's a good sort. I hated to do it. Some day you'll know why.

(*With more fervor.*)

Some day, perhaps, you'll forgive me.

(*A noise of some one approaching is heard off Right.* TREDBURY *looks anxiously in that direction. Holds out his hand.*)

Good-by — Dotty!

(*Goes swiftly to window, rear. Turning, and pointing up towards the ceiling.*)

Don't marry that chap!

(*Exit.* EDITH *goes to the window and looks after him. Enter, lower Right,* HIRAM PETERS.)

HIRAM

How be you to-day, Edith?

EDITH

(*Turning quickly.*)

Oh! Hello, Hiram!

HIRAM

Whar's the missus? She sent for me to see about gittin' some help to have a wall built.

EDITH

She's upstairs. They send for you for everything, don't they, Hiram?

HIRAM

I am a kind of a handy man. That and bein' the sheriff keeps me purty busy.

(*Sadly.*)

But there ain't as many criminals in the county as there used to be. How's that ther fool lord this morning?

EDITH

I believe he's still in bed.

HIRAM

In bed! Well, I'll be jiggered!

(*Looks at his watch.*)

I don't take much stock in this here effete nobility.

(*An uneasy pause.*)

Say, Edith, I knowed you sence you was a little girl. You ain't a-going to marry him, be you?

EDITH

I don't think so.

HIRAM

Don't marry that tom-fool lord. If I had to

marry one of them, I'd take Barking, durned if I wouldn't.

EDITH

(*Going up to* HIRAM, *pushing back his coat, and taking hold of the shield on his waistcoat.*)

Hiram, would you arrest anybody if I asked you to?

HIRAM

Guess I would! Anybody done anything?

EDITH

That Mr. Barking you were speaking of is about to make his escape.

HIRAM

I'll be jiggered. He was a nice appearin' feller. What's he done, looted the house? Took any silver?

EDITH

Not exactly that, but he's a fraud, and I have reason to suspect he is going to try to take the train at Balchville. I want you to keep an eye on him, and if he tries to get away, bring him back here, to me.

HIRAM

(*Looking at his watch, excitedly.*)

We'll have to go over to the Centre and git a warrant.

EDITH

A warrant!

(*Putting her hand on* HIRAM'S *shoulder.*) Hiram, couldn't you possibly do without the warrant? If you could only bring him back here quietly, it would save a lot of publicity, you know, and father hates publicity. Get him and bring him back to me. I'll talk to him.

HIRAM

It's irregular, Edith. By godfrey, it might bring on a war with Great Britain.

EDITH

(*Laughing.*)

Hardly that. Hiram, won't you do it for me? I'll promise you that it will go no farther. Bring him back here to me.

HIRAM

(*Looks at her and wavers.*)

Wal, it's consarned irregular, but I'll do it for you, Edith. I don't know what's gettin' into

the place. I ain't arrested nobody for three months. I'll chance it — I'll git him.

(*Starts for the window and turns.*)

Say, tell the missus I'll see her about that wall later.

(*Exit.* EDITH *goes to the window and looks after him, laughs, sits down at the desk, and puts her pen in her mouth. Enter* MRS. BLACKWELL, *lower Right.*)

MRS. BLACKWELL

(*Excitedly.*)

Edith, Lord Tredbury is up at last — he's coming down!

EDITH

(*Without looking up.*)

You don't mean it.

(*Begins to write.*)

MRS. BLACKWELL

Edith, I want to talk seriously with you. Why do you treat Lady Marjorie as you do? One would think you had no manners.

EDITH

You know it isn't the thing to have manners — except for horses.

MRS. BLACKWELL

Oh, do be serious for once; Lord Tredbury will be down any minute.

(EDITH *puts her hand on her heart.*)

What are you doing now? But, as I was saying, Lord Tredbury may be down any moment. *Do* be nice to him,—I'm sure you spilled him into the lake on purpose. It will be all right if he never knows it; and the aristocracy are dears, they are *so* undiscerning.

EDITH

(*Bending over her letter and writing.*)

Please wait a moment, Grace; I must get this letter off.

MRS. BLACKWELL

Oh, that's just like you, writing to veterinary surgeons when your life's happiness is at stake. Sometimes you are so like your father that I want to *beat* you.

EDITH

(*Folds the letter, puts it in the envelope, and closes it.*)

There! Now, what is it?

MRS. BLACKWELL

O dear, we are wasting so much time — and I don't know what to say to you.

EDITH

Perhaps I can say it, Grace. You want me to marry Lord Tredbury, whether I love him or not.

MRS. BLACKWELL

(*On the verge of tears.*)
Edith, you have a positively brutal way of putting things.

EDITH

(*Standing up and patting* MRS. BLACKWELL *on the shoulder. She has a man's way of doing this kind of thing, although she gives it a feminine touch.*)
There, don't cry. I haven't any objection to marrying Lord Tredbury.

MRS. BLACKWELL

(*Gasping, and rising to her feet.*)
You've no objection! Edith! Do you love him?

EDITH

What difference does that make? Well, I don't mind admitting that I am — rather fond of him.

MRS. BLACKWELL

Oh, my dear, my dear!

(*Stares at* EDITH, *totally at a loss.*)

Has he spoken already?

EDITH

I haven't allowed him to.

MRS. BLACKWELL

Oh, my dear! And do you think he loves you?

EDITH

Of course that couldn't make any difference, either. But I think he does.

(MRS. BLACKWELL *makes a forward movement, and* EDITH *evades her.*)

Please don't embrace me, Grace — I hate to be embraced.

MRS. BLACKWELL

(*Backing off and looking at her.*)

Incomprehensible girl! Edith, you're a dear!

(*Enter, lower Left,* MR. BARKING. *He is dressed in a rather louder checked travelling suit than the day before, and he has a blustering manner which betrays to the audience that he is nervous.* EDITH *has resumed her seat at the desk, where she is stamping and sealing her letter.*)

BARKING

(*Stopping short at sight of* MRS. BLACKWELL.)

Ah, dear Mrs. Blackwell —

MRS. BLACKWELL

(*Coming forward effusively and taking his hand.*)

Dear Lord Tredbury! I hope you slept well. I hope you feel no unfortunate effects from getting wet — I'm *so* glad that the lake was cold, — Englishmen and cold water go so perfectly together. As I said to dear Marjorie, if the lake had been *hot*, I should have worried about you. But it was quite cold, was it not?

BARKING

By jove, I should rather think so!

MRS. BLACKWELL

I am so glad. I told the valet to put a lump of ice in your bath this morning. I hope he did it. Edith should have warned you about getting into canoes — the poor child has been so worried. Really, her account of the accident was most distressing, and I almost wept when she told me how she saw your hat floating on the water, with nothing in it. She said it looked so natural.

BARKING

I say, did Miss Blackwell say that?

MRS. BLACKWELL

One notes the pathetic at such times. I hope you've had a good breakfast, Lord Tredbury. The dishes were on the sideboard. We follow the English custom of getting up and sitting down as often as possible. I never could quite understand it with the servants around, but I suppose the idea is that it gives one so much exercise. It's certainly delightful.

BARKING

(*He has not perceived* EDITH *at the desk. He has passed her, and his back has been turned towards her.* EDITH *now exits quietly by the rear windows.*)

Er — the fact is, I wanted particularly to see you alone.

MRS. BLACKWELL

(*Flustered.*)

Of course — certainly — Edith!

(*She turns and perceives* EDITH *is gone.*)

Why, she's gone. She was here only a moment ago.

BARKING

(*Glancing around, uneasily.*)

By jove, I didn't see her!

(*Turning to* MRS. BLACKWELL: *impulsively and jerkily.*)

Mrs. Blackwell — there is — er — there is — something I must tell you. I feel that it is due to you to tell you.

MRS. BLACKWELL

(*Softly.*)

I think I know.

BARKING

(*Taken aback.*)

You know — you knew all the time?

MRS. BLACKWELL

I am not so easily fooled as you imagine.

BARKING

How you must despise me! But really, it was not my fault — I was led into it.

MRS. BLACKWELL

(*Smiling with comprehension.*)

Oh, don't speak of them! Young men will

be young men, dear Lord Tredbury. What would an aristocracy be without its debts? That's the trouble with us in America; we pay our bills at once, although we are beginning to see that this is vulgar.

(*He starts to expostulate, but she silences him.*)

Let me finish. I can quite understand your delicacy, and I honor it, dear Lord Tredbury.

BARKING

Mrs. Blackwell, I entered your house in a false light. I must explain.

MRS. BLACKWELL

I told you that I quite understood.

(BARKING *looks at her blankly.*)

I quite understand. Dear me, I wish that French were still the Court language — one can express one's self so much better in French. I was aware of your mission to this country when I asked you to my house.

BARKING

My mission! Mrs. Blackwell, I must explain—

MRS. BLACKWELL

It is not necessary. The fact is, your entrance was quite opportune. I have been talking to Edith, and I feel that I may say to you, quite frankly, that I found her unexpectedly reasonable. I will also be frank with you and say that I had fears.

BARKING

(*Bewildered: sticking in his monocle.*)

Fears! Quite so.

MRS. BLACKWELL

Sometimes Edith has ridiculous fancies in social matters, and when I saw her wrestling with Mr. Barking, my spirits sank. One of the surest ways for a man to win her heart would be to wrestle himself into it. And yet you seem to have won it without resorting to such — violent methods, Lord Tredbury.

BARKING

(*Agitated.*)

I — I! I won her heart?

MRS. BLACKWELL

Your confusion does you credit. I have spoken to Edith. She is anything but indifferent

to you, dear Lord Tredbury, and she has confessed to me that you love her.

BARKING

I love her!

MRS. BLACKWELL

There, you must tell that to Edith. It was quite honorable to have spoken to me first. I was so afraid that she was taking a fancy to that Mr. Barking.

(BARKING *starts to expostulate.*)

There, you are loyal to your friend — but I understand. In these days when the aristocracy is so hard pressed, it is their friends that are thrust upon them. And now, you may find Edith; you have my permission — James. I hope you will allow me to call you James. Don't be shy with *her*. She is a problem, but if she is managed rightly, she will turn out to be a fine woman. She has already something of the English manner — the English rudeness, one might say. It is enough to begin with. She loves you, James, I am sure of it. But I confess that I am astonished that it has come about so quickly.

BARKING

Really, Mrs. Blackwell — I say — I had no notion of it, upon my word — I'm overwhelmed.

MRS. BLACKWELL

Don't look so frightened. Why is it men are always frightened? Here she comes! Now do be courageous — James.

(*Exit, throwing him a kiss.*)

BARKING

Oh, my God — she loves me! I might have known it. Why was I such a fool? I might have known it. What am I to say?

(*Enter* EDITH, *unconcernedly. She looks at him. He puts up his monocle and backs away from her.*)

Er — ahem! Er — ahem!

EDITH

Why, Lord Tredbury! I'm afraid your wetting didn't improve your throat any. I'm so sorry.

BARKING

Er — I have a far worse affliction than the throat, Miss Blackwell.

EDITH

(*Approaching him with mock anxiety.*)

Oh, tell me what it is, Lord Tredbury!

BARKING

(*Backs away.*)

I say — you — you mustn't call me that.

EDITH

(*Meaningly.*)

What shall I call you?

BARKING

(*Desperately.*)

I — I have something to tell you, Miss Blackwell. I tried to tell Mrs. Blackwell — er — I really can't say how distressed — and yet — ahem — and yet how I — er — tingle with — er — something I never felt before.

EDITH

The symptoms sound familiar.

BARKING

(*Transported.*)

I say, do they? I came down this morning resolved to tell your mother something, to tell you something, and — and — I find I've lost my head.

EDITH

(*With concern.*)

Have you missed it long?

BARKING

Eh?

(*Looks at her, but is reassured by her sympathetic manner.*)

I can't describe how your presence affects me. I didn't sleep a wink last night, not a wink, screwing up my courage to the sticking point.

(*Gazes at her tenderly.*)

I believe no man was ever in such a horrible plight, really. You see I'm all dressed to go away. I found out about the train. I asked the footman for a Bradshaw, and he brought me some kind of a cocktail — before breakfast, mind you. I drank it — I was in such a state.

(EDITH *is laughing quietly.*)

It seems I wanted the Baby Pathfinder. Now I can't go. I hoped — yes — I hoped for your sake, for both our sakes, that this would not come about, Miss Blackwell — Edith. You are too true a woman to love me for my — er — title. If it were otherwise, I would not say what I am going to say.

(MR. PEPYS *is seen strolling over the terrace towards the windows. They both look up.*)

EDITH

(*Runs towards the door, lower Right, turns and looks at him bewitchingly.*)

Don't say it now. We might go canoeing again this evening.

(*Exit.* BARKING *crosses over, Right, and stands looking after her. Enter* PEPYS *through a rear window.*)

PEPYS

Morning, Lord Tredbury. We missed you last night.

BARKING

(*Turning.*)

Er — yes — the fact is, I went to bed early. I was — er — quite exhausted.

PEPYS

Hope you're rested. You look fairly fit.

(*Goes to the table, picks up a paper, crosses over to a chair, Left, and sits down. Unperceived, he gives* BARKING *an amused look from behind the paper.*)

BARKING

(*Walks to the windows, rear, hesitates, comes halfway back, looks at* PEPYS, *who is apparently immersed in his reading. Coughs.*)

I say, Pepys, you're a devilish good sort of a chap.

PEPYS

(*Lowering his paper and smiling.*)
Thanks.

BARKING

A man of the world, and all that kind of thing. A chap who would never — er — betray a confidence.

PEPYS

I can't recall ever having betrayed one.

BARKING

I say, I'm in the devil of a scrape, don't you know. I've a great mind to tell you all about it — to — er — You seem so dashed level-headed.

PEPYS

What's the trouble, Lord Tredbury?

BARKING

Well — er — the first trouble is, you know, by jove — I'll tell you. I'm not Lord Tredbury.

PEPYS

(*With pretended astonishment.*)

Not Lord Tredbury! Would it be impertinent to ask who you are?

BARKING

Not at all, my dear chap; I'm Reginald Barking.

(*Looking around uneasily, as though fearing interruption.*)

It's a long story. The other chap is Lord Tredbury. He *has* to marry an American, and — er — he had Miss Blackwell in mind for the position.

PEPYS

(*Dryly.*)

Oh, I see.

BARKING

But mind you, he got a letter saying she wouldn't do at all, and begged me to come up. I said, "Suppose she falls in love with me!" "Oh, no," said he, "no possibility. Bet twenty guineas to one." Guineas!

(*Backing off, with a gesture.*)

Well, she has.

PEPYS

Fallen in love with you!

BARKING

Yes. I'm engaged to her. Mrs. Blackwell — er — proposed this morning, and — er — told me of Edith's affection for me.

PEPYS

(*Stifling laughter.*)
Then you've won your bet.

BARKING

Oh, damn that! There's the — ahem — moral question. That's what troubles me. I'm happy to say I'll have a title of my own some day. This *has* been a bit sudden, you know, but I mean to stick by my word. Of course, my governor will be horribly cut up — he rather wished me to marry into the aristocracy.

PEPYS

Your feelings do you credit.

BARKING

Thanks, old chap. But now — er — how about Mrs. Blackwell? I'm afraid she'll rear a bit, you know. I thought that you — er — as a man of the world —

(*Seeing no encouragement in* PEPYS'S *face.*)
Er — what would you advise me to do?

PEPYS

Confess, my dear fellow. That's part of the joke.

BARKING

(*Dubiously.*)

Yes. But, by jove, she's so erratic, you know. She might do anything. You'll stand by me, old chap. And then — er — it occurred to me last night that Mr. Blackwell might take a shot at me. I've heard Americans were so handy with revolvers, and all that.

PEPYS

(*Soberly.*)

You needn't be afraid of John; he isn't a very good shot. No, take my advice and confess to Mrs. Blackwell. The storm will blow over. You're quite right to treat it as a joke. By the way, here comes Mrs. Blackwell now. I'd like to stay here and see the fun if it wasn't for a natural delicacy.

BARKING

(*Wildly.*)

Oh, I say, delicacy be damned! Don't mind that! I say, I'd like to have you here.

(*He clutches* PEPYS. *Enter* MRS. BLACKWELL, *lower Left.*)

MRS. BLACKWELL

I'm so glad you've taken a fancy to Larry, James. He's a dear! But where is Edith?

BARKING

(*Looking at* PEPYS.)

She has — er — stepped out. Yes, stepped out — that's it.

(*Puts in his monocle, and gazes foolishly off, lower Right.*)

MRS. BLACKWELL

(*Reproachfully.*)

James, I hope you haven't quarrelled already.

BARKING

(*Aside, to* PEPYS.)

I say, old chap, couldn't you drop her a hint?

MRS. BLACKWELL

I suppose James has told you, Larry. Yes, it's true.

(*Sighs.*)

When Lord Tredbury spoke to me this morning it was a great shock, — so sudden, and so little time has elapsed.

(PEPYS *turns away and laughs silently.*)

But it is best to be sensible about these matters. They are inevitable.

BARKING

(*Desperately.*)

Oh, I say, Mrs. Blackwell, I must tell you something about myself.

MRS. BLACKWELL

(*Interrupting.*)

James, you are so painfully honest. Do let youthful indiscretions be a closed book. We are getting more and more sensible about that sort of thing in America.

(*The telephone on the table, down Left, rings, and she goes to it.* BARKING *gazes at her helplessly.* PEPYS, *with his hand over his mouth, walks over to the window, down Right, and stands with his back to them during the following scene, his shoulders shaking intermittently with laughter.*)

(*Enter, quietly, by the rear windows, the* REPORTER. *He has a rather large hand camera in his hand, and unperceived by any one he levels it at* BARKING, *who is standing in an agonized position, puts in the long stop, and photographs him.*)

MRS. BLACKWELL

(*At the telephone: simpering.*)

Yes, dear, Lord TREDBURY is staying with us.

BARKING

(*Breaking in desperately.*)

I say, Mrs. Blackwell, one moment.

MRS. BLACKWELL

(*Waving him away with her hand, and speaking into the telephone.*)

He is just a nice, overgrown boy — *so* English, and he's actually trying to pull me away from the telephone.

(*A pause.* BARKING *starts back.*)

What's that?

(*A pause.*)

Well, dear, how clever you are. Yes, you've guessed it — Tredbury and Edith are engaged.

BARKING

Oh, by jove, Mrs. Blackwell, you mustn't; you know — you mustn't. I'll tell you why if you'll only listen! Oh, my God!

(MRS. BLACKWELL *puts up her hand and smiles absently, listening the while to the remarks that come palpitating through the telephone. In the rear the* REPORTER *is writing rapidly, a beatific smile on his face.*)

MRS. BLACKWELL

(*Into the telephone.*)

Dear Isabel, I don't know — Lord Tredbury made his proposal in form this morning; he was so nice about it, so *comme il faut.* I'll take Edith to Paris in September. I think November's a good month, but it's difficult for people to get into town so early.

(*A pause, during which* BARKING *stands helplessly resigned.*)

Dear Isabel, I don't wonder you're excited. I couldn't help telling *you.* Good-by, dear, James has taken such a fancy to me that he won't even let me talk.

(*She puts down the receiver.*)

BARKING

My God, Mrs. Blackwell, what have you done?

MRS. BLACKWELL

(*Looking up, beatifically.*)

James, don't be ridiculous. There's no use trying to keep a thing like that a secret.

(REPORTER *coughs discreetly and* MRS. BLACKWELL, BARKING, *and* PEPYS *all turn and face him.*)

(*To* REPORTER.)

What are you doing here again? You have great temerity, sir, to return.

REPORTER

I was once a war correspondent, and my paper telegraphed me last night to get the news at any cost.

MRS. BLACKWELL

Well, since you are here, I may as well tell you (*Grandly.*)

— that a marriage has been arranged —

BARKING

(*Wildly.*)

Stop, Mrs. Blackwell, stop, I command you! You must not! I must see you alone. I insist upon it. I demand it.

(*Enter* EDITH, *lower Right.*)

REPORTER

(*Picks up his camera, and backs away fearfully at sight of her: to* MRS. BLACKWELL.)

Thank you, I think I know everything — I

think I have enough. Good day, Mrs. Blackwell.

(*Exit, precipitately, by the rear window.*)

PEPYS

(*Aside, to* EDITH, *as she passes him: delightedly.*)

Oh, you vixen!

EDITH

(*Calmly.*)

What's the matter?

(*Enter, lower Left,* LADY MARJORIE.)

MARJORIE

Whatever's the matter?

MRS. BLACKWELL

(*Rushing to her, tearfully.*)

Dearest Marjorie, don't you know? You should have been told first, the very first, you are such a near friend of Tredbury's.

(MARJORIE *bewilderingly tries to disengage herself.*)

Lord Tredbury, I mean James —

(*Waves at* BARKING.)

and Edith are engaged to be married. I am *so*

excited. It only happened a little while ago, and I haven't had a chance to tell you.

MARJORIE

(*Dramatic, for once, pointing at* BARKING, *scornfully.*)

Do you mean that man? Is *he* engaged to Edith?

MRS. BLACKWELL

Certainly. He made his proposal in form half an hour ago — and in such good form.

BARKING

(*Wildly.*)

Great heavens, I shall go mad. I did nothing of the sort. I have been trying to tell her all morning, — but she won't listen —

MRS. BLACKWELL

James, you can't mean that you have another wife!

BARKING

No, no, my God, no —

MRS. BLACKWELL

Then what are you saying?

BARKING

I — I — I am not —

MARJORIE

(*Interrupting: sweetly.*)

I think he's been trying to tell you, Grace, that he is not Lord Tredbury.

BARKING

(*Groaning.*)

Er — I was just coming to that.

MRS. BLACKWELL

Just coming to it? What do you mean? Is it that you haven't yet come into your title?

BARKING

Precisely — that's it. My governor's — er — services — er — have meant so much to the party, and all that sort of thing —

MRS. BLACKWELL

Your governor!

(*Glancing from* PEPYS *to* MARJORIE.)

Has the man gone mad?

(*To* BARKING.)

What *are* you talking about?

BARKING

I was referring to — my father. He was ill advised enough to make a great fortune in — er — well, in china.

MRS. BLACKWELL

(*With an agonized shriek.*)

China! China!

(*Overpowered by the enormity of the news, she gazes at him speechless.*)

BARKING

(*With an attempt to assert his dignity.*)

My father's choice of a commodity may have been misguided, but nevertheless by his industry and ability he has built up a business that is known wherever — wherever —

(*He hesitates, seeing that* MRS. BLACKWELL *is paying no attention to him.*)

EDITH

(*Calmly.*)

Dishes are washed.

MARJORIE

(*Hastily.*)

Tredbury is so shy, Grace — so sensitive about people thinking that he wants to sell his title —

BARKING

(*Gaining confidence.*)

And when you took me for him he — er — just backed out. And then you snubbed him, you know.

MRS. BLACKWELL

You don't mean to tell me it was Lord Tredbury that I —

(*At this point* MRS. BLACKWELL'S *eye lights on the telephone instrument on the table, and, gazing at it, she suddenly becomes transfixed with horror, struck dumb, as it were. They all move a step towards her anxiously.*)

EDITH

What's the matter, Grace?

MRS. BLACKWELL

(*Panting.*)

The telephone!

(*Wildly.*)

I've announced the engagement. I've told Isabel Sibley, and I'm sure it's all around the lake by this! Oh, what shall I do? And the reporter! Larry, do try to catch him, and tell him it's all a mistake. He's only had ten minutes'

start. If you run fast, you can catch him before he reaches the village.

(*Exit* PEPYS, *rear.*)

I hope he can run faster than that. And where is Lord Tredbury? John had him here only last night. I might have known him, he was such a *mauvais garcon.*

(*To* BARKING, *pointing at the bell.*)

Ring the bell!

(BARKING *obeys mechanically.*)

Tredbury must be found!

(*Enter* BUTLER, *lower Left.*)

(*To* BUTLER.)

Stetson, do you remember a — a Mr. Barking who — was visiting Mr. Blackwell?

BUTLER

Perfectly, Madam.

(*He points out of the window, indignantly.*)

'E was 'ere not an hour ago, Madam. I seed a man a-hidin' be'ind the balustrade, and I goes out to ask 'im 'is business, and 'e was gone. Once I seed 'im a-hidin' in the syringes.

MRS. BLACKWELL

He must be found, Stetson. Telephone his description to the stables, to the lodge, to the

village — everywhere. He must be treated with every courtesy and brought back. Do you understand, Stetson? He is Lord Tredbury.

BUTLER

(*Imperturbably.*)
Very good, Madam.

MRS. BLACKWELL

(*Sitting down.*)
The aristocracy is unaccountable! Oh, what shall I do!

(*As the* BUTLER *exits Left, he runs into* MR. BLACKWELL *in a linen duster.* MR. BLACKWELL *exclaims,* BUTLER *begs his pardon, and exits. As* MR. BLACKWELL *recoils from the shock, his eye lights on* BARKING, *and at the same time* MR. BLACKWELL *puts his hand to his hip pocket.* BARKING *exits precipitately, lower Left, and* MR. BLACKWELL *produces a handkerchief from his pocket.*)

MR. BLACKWELL

(*Looking after* BARKING *in astonishment.*)
Is everybody crazy? I just met Larry Pepys

going like a madman at hare and hounds. He wouldn't pay any attention to me. I never saw him move faster than a walk in his life. And why did he run away?

MRS. BLACKWELL

(*Rising: not noticing* BARKING'S *exit.*)
John, *has* he run away? I was in hopes *you* had him.

MR. BLACKWELL

Had him! Oh, you're talking about the other one. That's what I came in for. Haven't you got him? It wouldn't be the first time you'd enticed one of my guests away from me. I *thought* you'd be after him.

MRS. BLACKWELL

Oh, John, you don't mean to say you've lost him. How stupid of you!

MR. BLACKWELL

(*With some heat.*)
Stupid! I don't see why you are so interested, Grace, when you snubbed him. How was I to know he wanted to escape! I went into Fowler's chicken yard about half-past seven this

morning, left this Barking in the buggy, and when I came out, he'd tied the horse to the fence and skipped.

MRS. BLACKWELL

Skipped!

MR. BLACKWELL

Yes, skipped. Thank God he didn't take the horse and buggy. I call that a durned mean return for my kindness, when I was going to show him the country and the house I was born in. I'll never forgive him. He deceived me — went to bed last night before I had finished my dinner so that he might be fresh for to-day's pleasure.

(*Snorts. Looks around and his eye lights on* MARJORIE. *Sternly.*)

But I have a notion who's responsible. Have you any other ladies in your house party?

MRS. BLACKWELL

(*Mystified.*)

No. Why?

MR. BLACKWELL

(*Interrupting: to* MARJORIE.)

Then I'll thank you to keep out of my rooms.

MARJORIE

Out of your rooms!

MR. BLACKWELL

Yes, out of my rooms. The view is very fine from my window, is it?

MARJORIE

(*Haughtily.*)
I don't know anything about your view.

MR. BLACKWELL

Humph! Of course not. I'll have you understand I'm a respectable man, and not given to intrigues. I won't have my good name ruined by any woman, and I won't have any woman talk about me familiarly behind my back.

(*To* MRS. BLACKWELL.)
You can have your lords and actresses, Madam, as long as they are harmless tomfooleries, but I stipulate they shan't interfere with me. When the actresses come into my rooms, and talk about the view from my window, out they go. I mean it. Ask this Miss Davenport, or whatever her name is, where Mr. Barking's gone. She can tell you if she will.

(*Towards the end of this speech,* BARKING *is seen peering in through rear windows.* MARJORIE *now walks out through a rear window, her nose in the air. Is seen to join* BARKING, *and they have a short conversation in pantomime before they disappear.*)

MRS. BLACKWELL

(*Who has been fidgeting in horror. Running to* MR. BLACKWELL.)

John, there's some terrible mistake. You don't know what you've done.

(*In an awed voice.*)

That was Lady Marjorie Ticknor!

MR. BLACKWELL

Well, I beg Lady Marjorie's pardon. I thought you told me all the women were here. Where is this Davenport woman?

(*With inspiration.*)

By George, I have it! Barking's gone off with her.

MRS. BLACKWELL

(*Distractedly: going off Left.*)

Oh, I can't waste any more time with you.

Everything's ruined now by your stupidity. Something must be done!

(*Exit, lower Left.* MR. BLACKWELL *watches her go in astonishment, and then turns to* EDITH, *bewildered.*)

MR. BLACKWELL

Well, this beats me! I've seen Grace and her parties in a ruction before, but never to equal this. Edith, you look sane. Tell me, what the deuce is the matter?

EDITH

(*Putting her arms around his neck.*)

Dear old Daddy, I'll tell you all about it. I never meant to fool you.

MR. BLACKWELL

(*Laughs.*)

Oh, it's some of your tricks. I might have known.

(*Comically.*)

But don't you think it's a little dangerous to push Grace as far as that? She's really in a pretty bad way. What have you done — you — you witch?

(*Fondles her.*)

EDITH

Really, it wasn't my fault, Dad. That is, most of it wasn't. It's so mixed up I scarcely know where to begin.

(*Enter* FOOTMAN, *upper Left.*)

FOOTMAN

Please, Miss, Doctor 'Awkins 'appened to be up at Mr. Townsend's and 'eard about your mare. 'E's in the stable now, Miss.

EDITH

Daddy, wait till I come back, and I'll tell you all about it.

(*Exit, through rear windows.*)

MR. BLACKWELL

(*To* FOOTMAN.)

Where is this actress who's visiting Mrs. Blackwell?

FOOTMAN

There's no h'actress in the 'ouse, as I know of, sir.

MR. BLACKWELL

(*In disgust.*)

You're a darned fool, too.

(FOOTMAN *still stands respectfully.*)
What are you waiting for?

FOOTMAN

If you please, sir, a groom was returning from the village with the mail and found Mr. Pepys sitting by the road, all in a 'eat, sir, wet through. 'E's taken 'im into your study. It looks remarkable like h'apoplexy, sir.

MR. BLACKWELL

Well, I'll be — I'll go to him.
(*Exit, upper Left, followed by* FOOTMAN. *At the same instant,* BARKING *and* LADY MARJORIE *are seen looking in at the windows, rear.* MARJORIE *enters boldly, followed with some caution, by* BARKING. *They come down centre.*)

MARJORIE

There's no one here.
(*Laughs.*)
For title-hunters, commend me to the free and democratic American nation. These people mean to have poor Treddy dead or alive.
(*Looking up at* BARKING.)
You had a narrow escape, rather.

BARKING

I was quite defenceless, you know. There was nothing better than a paper cutter at hand.

MARJORIE

I was talking about — the other danger. As I said just now, I could have told you she was a designing, cold-blooded girl, if I had dared to speak.

BARKING

(*With feeling.*)

Dared! Oh, Lady Marjorie! If you had only given me a hint last night that I occupied even a small niche in — in your — er — thoughts!

MARJORIE

How could I? You were in bed.

(*Looking up at him, ingenuously.*)

Mr. Barking, I hope you'll forgive me for talking to you on the terrace just now like a grandmother.

BARKING

I say, you don't *look* like a grandmother, and — er — I don't feel as if you were.

MARJORIE

Flatterer! Well, then, as I tried to impress upon you, a man of your career, and your future, should marry a woman of the world; a woman of tact, a *grande dame*, if you like, a person of whom you would be proud when you become Prime Minister.

BARKING

(*A step towards her.*)

Lady Marjorie — .

MARJORIE

(*Without seeming to pay attention.*)

She need not be rich — necessarily, nor a beauty, but she should have — well — friends at court, who will help you to a title of your own, when the time comes. A — a duke in the family goes a long way, you know, even in these days. There, I've said it!

BARKING

Lady Marjorie! When I saw you —

(MARJORIE *goes off, Left.*)

Where are you going?

MARJORIE

To tell my maid to pack. I really can't stay with Grace after this, and that horrible Mr. Blackwell has insulted me.

BARKING

You —

(*Swallows.*)

you are going on my account.

MARJORIE

(*Standing with her back to him, looking over her shoulder, smiling.*)

Let's call it national pride. It — sounds better.

(*Turns her head away, but does not go.*)

BARKING

(*Taking a step or two after her.*)

Oh, Lady Marjorie, if I only dared.

MARJORIE

(*Softly.*)

I thought you would dare anything.

BARKING

I do. I dare! *You* are the one I have been waiting for all my life. *You* little know it, but you have sketched yourself as I have always seen you in my heart!

(*Runs to her, seizes her hand. Her head is still turned away.*)

Won't you look at me?

MARJORIE

(*Turns her head and looks at him.*)
We'll talk about it — at Lenox.

(*Suddenly* EDITH *appears in the French window, rear, and* MARJORIE *drops* BARKING'S *hand hastily.*)

EDITH

(*Entering and smiling at them. To* BARKING.)
It's much more appropriate than if you were to marry me, isn't it?

(BARKING, *hugely embarrassed, does not answer.*)
I could have told you that Lady Marjorie — admired you tremendously.

BARKING

Er — admired me?

MARJORIE

It's quite evident why you didn't.

EDITH

Quite. He was making love to me as Lord Tredbury.

MARJORIE

And of course you couldn't afford to run the risk of losing a title.

EDITH

I felt that Mr. Barking couldn't afford to run that risk either. That's the reason I didn't show him this letter which I believe Lady Marjorie wrote to Lord Tredbury.

(*Produces from her pocket the letter.* MARJORIE *recognizes it and starts forward, blanching.*)

(*To* BARKING.)

If you knew the very complimentary things Lady Marjorie wrote about you in this letter, I am sure you would be convinced.

BARKING

I say, did she? I had no idea —

(*Looks slyly at* MARJORIE.)

MARJORIE

(*Beside herself.*)

I don't think it quite honorable, let us say, to read other people's letters.

EDITH

(*Looking at her.*)

Neither do I.

(*Smiling.*)

I happen to know the contents because Lord Tredbury read this letter aloud —

BARKING

Tredbury!

MARJORIE

Lord Tredbury read that letter aloud?

EDITH

To Dotty Davenport. *You* were not the only person mentioned, Mr. Barking.

(*Looking at* MARJORIE.)

There was something said about the unattractive, impossible, and hoidenish Miss Blackwell. But it's all quite true, so there's no harm done.

(MARJORIE *and* BARKING *are speechless.*)

(*To* BARKING.)

If I had not had other indications, I should have guessed from this

(*Tapping letter.*)

that you were not Lord Tredbury.

BARKING

You knew I was not Lord Tredbury? You knew all the time? Oh, by jove!

EDITH

I am going to give back Lady Marjorie her letter, but I hope she will not tell you what is in it.

(*A slight pause.*)

It *might* turn your head.

(*Hands* MARJORIE *the letter.*)

MARJORIE

(*Takes it and crushes it.*)

EDITH

And now, if you will accept my congratulations —

BARKING

(*Starts forward and takes her hand.*)

Upon my word, Miss Blackwell, you're a brick. I — I don't know what to say.

EDITH

Don't say anything.

MARJORIE

(*Taking* EDITH'S *hand.*)
Edith, I'm afraid I did you an — an injustice.

EDITH

I'm afraid you did.

MARJORIE

If I ever can be of service to you, in England —

EDITH

You are very kind. I shall remember it — if I ever go to England. And now, if you don't object to my giving you both a tip, I think — if I were you — I should take a walk in the pine woods.

BARKING

Thanks awfully.
(*To* MARJORIE.)
Er — do you mind?

MARJORIE

(*Hesitating: then deciding.*)
Well, I'll go if you like.
(*Exeunt* MARJORIE *and* BARKING, *lower Right.*)
(*A commotion is heard and* HIRAM *and* TREDBURY, *accompanied by* MR. BLACKWELL, *are*

seen crossing the terrace, all talking, and approaching the windows in the rear. Enter these three, all talking at once, HIRAM *carrying a heavy dressing case,* TREDBURY *a handbag, which each deposits as he comes down.* MR. BLACKWELL *and* TREDBURY *are together,* HIRAM *a little apart and behind them.* EDITH *runs to upper Left where she remains, unseen by the three.*)

MR. BLACKWELL

(*To* TREDBURY.)

You thought my daughter was an actress?

TREDBURY

(*To* HIRAM.)

Why the devil didn't you say Miss Blackwell told you to arrest me? I wouldn't have mentioned the ambassador.

HIRAM

(*Who is apologizing to* MR. BLACKWELL.)

Wimmen is awful critters to tempt a man, John, you know that. But, by godfrey, he *did* look like a crook when he was workin' through Easy Jones' woods with that there sample case.

(*Points to dressing case.*)

(*To* TREDBURY.)

So you're a lord! I want to know! I don't mind shakin' hands with ye, anyhow, and sayin' I'm sorry. You ain't such a durned fool after all.

(*Puts out his hand.*)

TREDBURY

(*Taking it: laughing.*)

Thanks, Mr. Peters. If you'd only mentioned who made the complaint, I would have led the way.

(EDITH *disappears, upper Left.*)

MR. BLACKWELL

(*Biting off a cigar.*)

Hiram, I guess young people will be young people.

(*To* TREDBURY.)

I won't deny I've had a prejudice against titles, too; you may have gathered that from my conversation. There, young man, I like you, and you've owned up honestly. I'll forgive you. But she's very dear to me, in spite of her tricks.

(*Brushes his eyes.* TREDBURY *seizes his hand, and wrings it in silence. Suddenly a great squawking is heard in the rear, as of a general cock fight in progress, and* MR. BLACKWELL *and* HIRAM

both exit through the rear window, precipitately. EDITH *comes in, upper Left, unconcernedly, and stands a moment gazing out of rear windows after them.*)

EDITH

(*Turning.*)

How shameful of the sheriff to neglect his duty! Why has he left the prisoner alone?

TREDBURY

Miss Blackwell!

EDITH

(*Coming down and seating herself in a large armchair; with mock dignity, imitating a judge.*)

Why has the prisoner been released?

TREDBURY

May it please your Lordship, the complainant didn't appear, you know.

EDITH

Well, what have you to say for yourself? Why did you run away?

TREDBURY

(*Gloomily.*)

It's no easier to confess now than it was before

I went. Of course, I've been an ass, I don't deny it.

(*Impulsively.*)

If you were only Dotty Davenport, I could tell you all.

EDITH

That isn't a proper way to address a — a magistrate. And, besides, I don't expect you to incriminate yourself. I will give the prisoner to understand that this trial will be conducted in all fairness.

TREDBURY

By jove, I should say it was a trial.

(*A noise is heard off.* TREDBURY *looks around.*)

And, by the way, I'm not supposed to come in this part of the house, you know.

EDITH

Oh, you needn't be alarmed; Mrs. Blackwell is off looking for Lord Tredbury.

TREDBURY

(*Starting.*)

For Tredbury?

EDITH

Yes. He escaped, you know. Mrs. Blackwell

is having the surrounding country searched; the woods beaten. I shouldn't wonder if she'd offered a reward for him, if produced alive. The demand for titles is so great in America that we never let one escape without an effort to recapture it.

TREDBURY

(*Laughs uneasily.*)

So he's run away. Oh, by jove! And do you mean to tell me they're chasing him? I hope they give him a good, round thrashing. You wouldn't mind telling me the immediate cause of his flight.

EDITH

Well, I think he ran away for fear he would have to marry me.

TREDBURY

(*Starting forward: in anger and amazement.*)

For fear — You don't mean that. You're joking — you couldn't love *him.*

EDITH

Love is *bourgeois;* only the lower classes and fools marry for love. We are learning better in America — nowadays our marriages are arranged.

TREDBURY

You didn't agree to marry him. I know you didn't. If a man were poor and needy and rejected —

EDITH

(*Interrupting.*)

No. I didn't agree to marry — Mr. Barking.

TREDBURY

(*With a sudden flash of understanding.*)

Mr. Barking.

EDITH

Don't interrupt. Mr. Barking has already been sufficiently punished. He is about to serve a life sentence — he is going to marry Lady Marjorie.

TREDBURY

(*Bursting into laughter.*)

To marry Marjorie! I'm — I'm revenged.

(*Coming forward impetuously.*)

Ah, was there ever such a woman in the world as you! How could I have been such a fool! I see it now, you've known all the time — you knew who I was when we met at the Post-office. I loved Dotty Davenport. I would have followed her to the ends of the earth. I plead guilty, but that's my excuse. I love you, Edith —

EDITH

(*Rising.*)

Aren't you afraid of being fined for contempt? The court will adjourn.

TREDBURY

(*Seizing her hands.*)

I throw myself on the mercy of the court. Edith! Have you nothing to say? Can you give me no hope?

EDITH

Well — I think I will give you — a life sentence, too.

TREDBURY

(*Seizing her in his arms.*)

And I will love you and serve you all my life.

(*A pause.*)

EDITH

(*Trying to disengage herself and glancing out, Right, where the loggia is.*)

Here comes Grace.

(*Looking at him, with laughter in her eyes.*)

She will think — we have been wrestling again.

(*Enter, lower Right,* MRS. BLACKWELL. *She takes in the situation at a glance.*)

MRS. BLACKWELL

Edith! You've found him! Thank heaven, those women won't have a chance to talk! I've never been so relieved in all my life.

(*Sinking into a chair and fanning herself.*)

Oh, James, come here. How could you have been so naughty!

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